Growing as Jesus Grew

TWENTY-FIVE LESSONS FOR THE DAILY VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

By REV. HOWARD V. YERGIN

Edited by John T. Faris, D.D.

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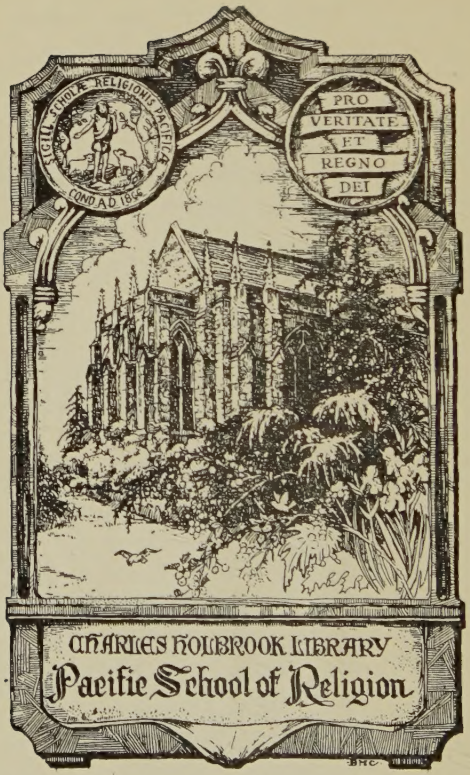
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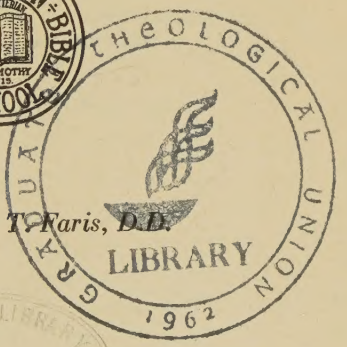

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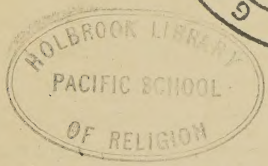

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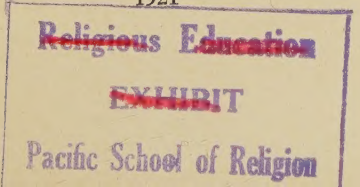

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LESSON I

WHY JESUS CAME

LESSON MATERIAL: Gen. 1:1 to 2:2.

MEMORY VERSE: "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." John 10:10.

PURPOSE: To show that Jesus' coming was part of God's great plan to teach men of his love for them, and how to live so as best to know and enjoy him.

Years and years ago, back in the beginning of our country's history, when most of the land was wilderness and there were no railroads, or even roads, and towns were small and few, a man left his wife and children and went out into the wilderness to make a home for them. He selected the finest spot he could find, cut down the trees, cleared a little patch of ground, hewed the logs into boards, and built a house. Then he cut more trees, and patiently, lovingly—thinking all the time of the wife and little children for whom he was working—he fashioned tables and chairs and beds, and cupboards and all the other pieces of furniture necessary to housekeeping. He planted a garden that would supply food for them. He even made a flower bed, that the new home might be as beautiful and attractive as possible.

When he had done all that he could, and had looked it all over carefully and had seen that it was good, he brought his family there to live. Happily he took them all over the house, showing them the rooms and each

piece of furniture; then out into the garden where the corn and potatoes and other vegetables were growing; then to the flower bed at the side of the house where the flowers were blooming their very finest in welcome to the newcomers.

Can you picture to yourself the joy and the thankfulness that filled the hearts of his family as they realized that it was all theirs, and that it was the great love of the father that had furnished it all for them? How they thanked him! And loved him! Every time they looked at the house or the garden or the flower bed there came back to them the realization of how carefully and thoughtfully he had planned for their comfort and happiness, all because he loved them so very much.

Now that is just what God did, way back "in the beginning," as the Bible says. He, too, made a home for those whom he loved. He, too, planted a garden, as you will find if you will read those wonderful first chapters of Genesis. He created all things, the sun and the moon and the stars, the earth and the sea, the trees and the flowers, the animals and the fish—all things are the result of his thoughtful and loving planning.

And when all was ready and God had looked upon each part of his creation and had seen that "it was good," then it was that he created man, and placed him in the beautiful world he had made. He told him that it was all for him; that the flowers and the fruit, the vegetables and the animals and the fish, the sun and the

rain, the heat and the cold—all these things were for man's comfort, provided for him by God because he loved man and wanted him to have the very best there was, and to live the happiest, healthiest, purest life possible. All he expected in return was that man should love him and do the things he asked him to do.

Now doesn't it seem to you that man should have been glad to obey God? But man soon became careless and forgetful and began to think that he himself was the cause of all the beauty and usefulness in the world. He forgot to love and obey God, in spite of the fact that the marks of God's labor and planning for him were all about him. And so man sinned. That is, he forgot God and disobeyed his loving commands.

But God still loved man. Even when God's people had turned away from him, God followed them and tried to draw them back again, to show them how great was his love, and how earnestly he desired to have them live as he had planned. Remember how tenderly God dealt with the first murderer, though it was, of course, necessary to punish him. God put his own mark upon Cain's head so that no one should hurt him, for he still belonged to God, though he had sinned. And so it was with all other men. God never stopped loving them or trying to bring them back again to right living and into close relationship with him. He sent the prophets to warn and teach them, but still men persisted in wrong living, which brought them all kinds of

trouble; it brought suffering and misery; it brought sickness and death, as it always has, and always will. Then God, still loving his people and grieving that they were hurting themselves so through their sin, carried out his final and wonderful plan to draw men close to him: He sent his own Son, Jesus, into the world, to live here as a man, and to teach, by his words and by his life, about God and about God's love.

Do you remember that wonderful verse in John, ch. 3:16: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life"? And Jesus himself, in our Memory Verse for to-day, said, "I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly."

Jesus came to rouse men to life and to God, out of the death of sin; he came to show men how their disobedience and their wrong living were bringing suffering and death to them continually; he came to show them above all how righteous living, obedience to God, and loving service of him, would bring real peace and joy and everlasting life. And Jesus did this, not only by his life and words, but also by the cruel death that he suffered, not because of his own sin, for he had never sinned, but because of the sin of men.

This was the wonderful plan of God, to waken men to full life out of the death of sin and to teach them how best to use the life he had given, and how to get from the world in which he had placed them the very greatest joy and peace.

LESSON II

THE HOME INTO WHICH JESUS CAME

LESSON MATERIAL: Luke 2:1-7.

MEMORY VERSE: "For the Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." Mark 10:45.

PURPOSE: To show Jesus in a home such as most of us live in, not rich or luxurious, but poorly furnished, where each member contributes to the comfort and welfare of all.

Have you heard of the golden house of Nero? Nero, you remember, was one of the most powerful of the old Cæsars. He certainly was one of the most wicked of the Roman emperors. It was he who first persecuted the Christians, putting them to death by all kinds of horrible and cruel methods: the Apostle Paul was probably killed by his orders out on the Ostian Way beyond the walls of Rome.

Nero built a house for himself, and because he was so rich and powerful and thought himself such a very great king, he made it the greatest house that probably ever was built for anyone. Its ruins may still be seen opposite the Colosseum in Rome—in fact the Colosseum was later built on the site of a lake in Nero's front yard. This house was more than a mile long and half a mile wide. Think of it, twenty blocks long, and half as wide! It was not very high to be sure, but it had thousands of rooms for all sorts of purposes; there were gardens and parks and temples to the various gods, as well as lakes and canals. One big canal ran the whole length of the inside of the house, so

that one could go from the back to the front by boat if he didn't want to walk all the way. There was a big throne room where Nero sat on a golden throne and received the homage of his subjects and an enormous and magnificent banquet hall where the richest and costliest food and drink was served in greatest abundance, and where the most extravagant and often shameful entertainments were provided. There was also a barracks where the imperial guard was constantly stationed. Everything was decorated and furnished in such a marvelous way that the palace has ever since been known as the Golden House. Wasn't it too bad, that, with all his wealth and luxury, with all the servants to wait upon him and do his slightest will, Nero was so wicked and unhappy?

One day there came to earth a greater king than Nero, one who should rule, not over a part of the world, but over all the world; one who was not a king among other kings, but was to be King of kings and Lord of lords. You know who this was—Jesus.

Now, if Nero was right and the greatest king should have the greatest house, and the most gold and silver, and the most servants to wait upon him, what kind of house would Jesus have? Can you imagine it?

But Jesus did not come into that kind of house at all, because Nero was not right. Real kingliness is not shown by the wealth and power and servants a king possesses, nor by his ability to make everyone serve him. Real kingliness is shown in quite another way and doesn't at all depend on these things. So Jesus came

into a house just about the opposite of Nero's Golden House.

The house in which Jesus lived most of his life in Nazareth had, not thousands of rooms, but one room, and this room had to serve as parlor, dining room, kitchen, and bedroom. Of course it had no throne room or big banquet room, and there were no lakes and gardens and canals. Jesus found all of these out of doors, as we shall see later. And there were no soft beds—just mats that the family unrolled at night when they lay down upon the hard floor; no fine couches and handsome chairs—just boxes, or blocks of wood, or crude stools; no beautiful chandeliers hanging from the ceiling or out from the walls—just plain candles or little olive-oil lamps set on a shelf in the wall where they gave light to all that were in the room; not an abundance of silver and gold—so little of it that Jesus had probably seen his mother sweep the house in every nook and corner when such a small piece as a dime was lost; not silken clothing in abundance, richly colored and ornamented—but the plainest and stoutest of clothing, that was probably often patched until there came a time when it could be patched no longer and Jesus' mother told him that the cloth was so very old that if a new piece were put in it would tear the old cloth; not a great variety of rich and tempting food, but the simplest of fare—two sparrows that sold for a farthing, bread that his mother kneaded herself and mixed with leaven until the whole was leavened and then baked in the great earthen oven outdoors, in which Jesus perhaps built the

fire himself, using the grass of the field which had dried up and casting this into the oven to start the fire with.

No, it was not a Golden House into which Jesus came to live. It was a pretty poor sort of house. But happiness was there, and peace, and these two things Nero in his wonderful house never knew. Jesus had four brothers and at least two sisters, which made a family of nine, quite a family to live on the small earnings of a carpenter in those days, and quite a family, too, to live together in the little one-room house. But there Jesus learned, and the others learned, what Nero, and thousands of others, have never learned: that happiness comes when all help one another, and not when each one demands that all the others wait upon him.

You know how it is in your own home. When are the unhappiest times? When all the children are trying to have the same thing at the same time, or when they "don't want" to help out by carrying wood or water or going on errands or minding the baby? That is the kind of spirit that was in Nero's house.

But when are the happiest times in your home? When all are playing peaceably together, and when each does his share in doing the things that have to be done? That also is true, and you know it. And that was the spirit that was in Jesus' home in Nazareth. It was there that he showed that true happiness, true greatness, true kingliness, come not from the outward show made with house and furniture and clothes and food and servants, but with cheerfulness and kindness and a desire to help others.

It was in this house that Jesus made plans for the carrying out of the great purpose of his life. Remember that he was God's own Son, the King of kings and Lord of lords—yet he showed that "The Son of man also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister." That is why Jesus is worshiped all over the world today.

And some men are loved and honored because they have learned the lesson from Jesus—men like Washington and Lincoln and Livingstone, who gave all they had to help their brother men. We need to learn that this is the way we can become really great, and be loved by everyone though we have little money or property; we must see how much we can do to help others, as Jesus did. We can never become great by trying to make others serve us, as Nero did.

LESSON III

JESUS' FATHER AND MOTHER

LESSON MATERIAL: Luke 2:41-52.

MEMORY VERSE: "Honor thy father and thy mother." Deut. 5:16.

PURPOSE: To afford a glimpse of ideal parenthood, and to show the necessity for our own right living for the sake of those who shall come after us.

When should a child begin to go to school? Some of you will say when the child is five years old; some will say the age should be six, or even seven. This question was once asked of a wise Frenchman and he made a strange reply. He said, "One hundred years before

the child is born." What do you suppose he meant? Something like this, I think: That what our fathers and mothers are, what our grandparents and great-grandparents are, has a very great deal to do with what we are.

If our ancestors were strong and healthy, the probability is that we also shall be strong and healthy; if they were weak and sickly, we may be inclined that way. If they were learned and wise, very probably the same keenness of mind will be ours if we use our opportunities. If they were good and upright, we shall be apt to feel that we must also be good and upright. If they were careless in their lives, this fact may make it harder for us to be what we ought to be. You see how important it is for us to have the right kind of parents and grandparents! Of course I do not mean that we are excused for bad conduct because of the bad conduct of our ancestors. Nothing excuses us for failures and sins, for we have a will of our own to choose what we will be. If our ancestors were not all good people, we may have to try all the harder to be what God wants us to be. But he will help us no matter how hard it may be.

These facts are illustrated by the story of two families of which we have the history for over two hundred years. The first is the famous, or infamous, Jukes family, in New York State. The founders of the family were bad, thoroughly bad—weak in their bodies, in their minds, and in their souls. And almost every one of their descendants became dependent upon the state in one way or another, either as criminals in the prisons

or as diseased in the hospitals or as insane in the asylums or as paupers in the poorhouses. It was figured up very carefully that in seventy-five years time this one family cost the state of New York over $1,250,000 in jail and hospital and poorhouse expenses, to mention nothing of the more important things—misery and crime and suffering.

The other family was that of Jonathan Edwards, a great preacher and writer who was president of Princeton University about two hundred years ago. He left no bank account, but among his children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren were fourteen college presidents, thirty judges, sixty authors who wrote one hundred and thirty-five books, sixty physicians, seventy-five officers in the Civil War, eighty men prominent in the government of the state or nation, fifteen high railway officials, one hundred clergymen, missionaries, and theological professors, and a great many other splendid and useful men and women.

So it is very important, you see, what kind of ancestors we have. But it is still more important what kind of ancestors we are going to be, and whether our children and grandchildren shall rise up and call us blessed, or whether they shall look back with bitterness upon our lives because these were wrong.

When Jesus was born into the world, the house in which he lived and the clothes he wore were not of much consequence, but it was very important that he should have the right kind of father and mother to teach and help him. And so when the angel told Mary,

Jesus' mother, about the wonderful baby which should be born of her, and said to her, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God," we may be very sure that God had watched over Mary carefully, and had seen in her modesty and loyalty and loveliness, and in her faithfulness and love to God, those qualities which would make her an ideal mother.

It was not an accident that the authors of the Gospels of Matthew and Luke gave us long lists of hard names of men who were the ancestors of Jesus. About many of them we do not know anything, but about some we know a very great deal, and what we know prepares us to expect some very remarkable qualities in their decendants.

Joseph, Jesus' earthly father, was very important, too. Our fathers have much to do with our characters. Joseph is described in the Bible as a "righteous" man. This sounds a little bit stern all by itself, even though righteousness is one of the finest of characteristics. But when we realize that the term which Jesus used oftenest in describing God, was the word "Father," we must think that it was from Joseph that he learned the meaning of the best kind of fatherhood.

Do you remember how Jesus, when he was talking about God's love for us as his children and his desire to give us good things, asked if men, who are only earthly fathers, would give stones to their children when they asked for bread or serpents to those who asked for fish. Jesus must have been thinking then of the loving and

thoughtful way in which Joseph had supplied food for the hungry little mouths in the home in Nazareth. And when he taught his disciples how to pray, he told them to speak to God as " Our Father." Because Joseph was a kind and loving and patient earthly father, Jesus was the better able to use the name freely and gladly in speaking of God.

These then were Jesus' earthly parents: Mary, the ideal mother, whom all the world has honored because she was so modest and faithful and wise that she found favor with God; and Joseph who represented to Jesus the finest type of earthly fatherhood.

Jesus was "subject unto them." All children should be subject to their parents. Mothers and fathers know best what is good for us. The New Testament commands us to obey our parents "in the Lord," just as the old Commandment bids us, "Honor thy father and thy mother." Jesus learned all that his father and his mother could possibly teach him. And we must learn from our fathers and mothers all the good and helpful things we can.

Please repeat that verse with me, "And he was subject unto them." Then start to think what it means. Jesus, the Son of God, the most wonderful Man who ever lived, obeyed his parents, gladly, cheerfully. Can we do less?

Suggestion to Teacher: Use to-morrow to organize your athletics for the school term, thus emphasizing the Bible lesson and placing your games upon the right basis at the start.

LESSON IV

JESUS AT PLAY

LESSON MATERIAL: Matt. 11:16-19.

MEMORY VERSE: "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Col. 3:17.

PURPOSE: To show the value of playing properly.

Boys, will you name over slowly some of the games you know how to play, while I write them on the blackboard? Are there other games that perhaps you don't play yourselves, but that you know about and that are played to-day?

Now girls, it is your turn. Let us see how many games you play that the boys don't play or how many you can think of that the boys haven't thought of.

You see we have quite a long list. And I am sure that if we tried a little longer we could add many more games to the list. What are the games for? To have fun? Yes. We play as a relief from work. "All work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," you know. (Though it is also true that all play and no work makes Jack a mighty useless sort of boy.)

God planned play as a happy part of our lives, to relieve tired brains and bodies and to help us get away from the too serious part of life. The right kind of play does a great many things for us, especially for boys and girls. It develops muscles and brains; it teaches quickness and accuracy and teamwork and skill of many kinds. God meant that boys and girls should play much and therefore I am sure that Jesus

must have played a great deal when he was a boy. For, while he carried wood and water and helped his father at the carpenter's bench, and went to school, he still had plenty of time to play, just as you have, after you have done all your chores.

I tried to find out a little while ago what kind of games Jesus knew how to play. And, strange to say, though I looked in many big books and asked some very wise men, I didn't find out very much. Apparently boys and girls in Jesus' day didn't know anything about baseball and basket ball and all these other games you have mentioned.

Some of the traditions about Jesus and his playmates say that they used to make clay animals and birds and imagine that they were alive and play with them. Perhaps they did. But two games I know they played, because Jesus himself told about them. And from what he says children were the same in his day as now.

Perhaps Jesus and some friends went to the market place one day all ready to play and have a good time. They saw there another group of children. "Come on!" called those with Jesus, "We'll whistle for you, and we'll play wedding." "Don't want to," replied the other group sulkily. "All right, then," cheerily called Jesus' friends, "If you don't feel like a wedding, let's play funeral." (Remind the children that Oriental weddings and funerals are much more elaborate and pageant-like than in America.) "No, don't want to do that either," said the other group. So Jesus and his friends had to go on their way.

Did you ever hear boys or girls do like that? They wouldn't join in any game at all, but just sulked and pouted by themselves! Evidently Jesus didn't think much of that kind of spirit. When he was a boy I know he played gladly and with all his heart whatever right kind of game was suggested, playing sometimes the games others suggested, and then of course expecting them to play his games with him.

Jesus soon discovered what we all ought to discover, if we haven't already done so, that the best times come when everyone plays the game with everyone else—"teamwork" we call it in baseball and football and basket ball. You boys, and you girls, too, know that you can't win games when every player plays to suit himself, but only when each one plays as part of the team.

Though we don't know just what other games Jesus and his friends played, we can be pretty sure how Jesus played. He didn't get angry and quit, even though sometimes it seemed as if the others weren't quite fair. Or if the game was going against him he didn't set up a howl. He played with the best there was in him, but he played fair and square. Jesus once said, "No man, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." He said this about working, to be sure, but he could have said it just as truly about playing; he would not be a slacker, a quitter, under any circumstances. Be sure that a boy or a girl who is a quitter in a game will be a quitter in his work, also!

Some years ago a Yale freshman team went to a neighboring college to play the freshman team there. When the game was about half over a referee's decision on an important point seemed plainly unfair to the Yale team and gave the other team a big advantage. The Yale men decided they'd quit the game then and there: they wouldn't stand for such treatment. But, just as they started to walk off the field, an old Yale graduate came to the captain and quietly said, "My boy, Yale has never yet left a field." All at once it came to the Yale team just what they were doing. Back they went amid the cheers of the crowd, who appreciated their fine sportsmanship. They played out the game. They lost it, but they won what was far more valuable, their own approval and the admiration of everyone else.

George Washington always delighted in good sport. He practiced running, leaping, wrestling, and he rode fearlessly on the most fiery horse. As a man he liked fair play because as a boy he played fair. His schoolmates always wanted him to be the umpire whenever they quarreled; and they agreed gladly to whatever decision he made.

There was once a captain of a very famous college football team, a team that won almost every game it played. Some one asked the captain who was the best player on the team how he came to be such a good player and how his team came to be such a fine team. What was the secret of their success? He answered that before every game he prayed that he and his team might play their very best, never losing their heads,

never getting angry, never breaking the rules. He didn't pray that he might win, but that he might be given strength and courage to play the very best and cleanest game he knew how. Somehow strength came to him—not only physical strength, but moral strength. And somehow, also, his team usually won.

I have spoken of some games Jesus played. We know also some games he did not play. Do you know what some of them are? Rolling dice, for one. I know they did that in Jesus' day, or something very similar to it, for when he was dying on the cross we read that the soldiers "cast lots," that is, gambled, for his clothing. Shooting craps, playing for keeps, gambling in all its forms—these Jesus never did. Why? Suppose you tell me why I am so sure he never did? Because they aren't honest? Yes. Because they are the same as stealing? Yes. (Elicit other replies.) Jesus was poor, and often the family must have wished that somehow there might be a little more to eat in the little house and better clothes to wear. Yet always Jesus knew that only when things were gained by honest work were they properly secured.

Paul, who knew Jesus' clean, fair, and kind methods of work and of play says to us in to-day's Memory Verse: "Whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." I hope that this is the way you boys and girls will play your games in connection with our Daily Vacation Bible School and elsewhere.

Suggestion to Teacher: Make to-morrow a real "Mother's Day." Have the children wear a white

flower or a white ribbon, and, if possible, arrange for a mothers' party in the afternoon or evening, or invite the mothers especially for the morning.

LESSON V

JESUS LEARNING FROM HIS MOTHER

LESSON MATERIAL: Luke 1:26-56; 2:19, 51.

MEMORY VERSE: "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might." Deut. 6: 4, 5.

PURPOSE: To show a mother's influence and the reverence due to mothers.

I wonder how many here to-day have ever seen the queer little metal box that is tacked on the doorpost of every good Jewish home? This little box is only about two and a half inches long and perhaps half an inch wide. It is open down the center so that a little strip of printed paper is seen in it. The words on this paper are words that have been taught to Jewish boys for more than two thousand years. They are the words that God, through Moses, commanded should be so taught, and should be so written upon the doorposts of the house and upon the gates. See Deut. 6: 1-9; 7: 7, 8.

"Hear, O Israel: Jehovah our God is one Jehovah: and thou shalt love Jehovah thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might . . . Jehovah did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all peoples: but because Jehovah loveth you."

Long ago, when these words were on the doorposts of the people who lived in Jesus' village every boy's mother taught them to him, and explained their meaning when he was old enough to understand them. So, I think, one morning, after her housework in the little home in Nazareth had been done, Mary called Jesus from his play and pointed out to him the words written upon the doorpost of the house, and began to teach them to him.

Suppose we learn them now, just as Jesus learned them—only of course we are to learn them in English, but he learned them in the Hebrew or Aramaic language.

Jesus was probably about five years old when he began to learn these words. Over and over again he repeated them after his mother, who patiently, lovingly helped him. Mothers have to be so patient—teaching boys!

The mother of John and Charles Wesley, great preachers in the early history of America, used to have her boys repeat everything she was trying to teach them at least twenty times, because, she said, if she stopped at nineteen times they were sure to forget.

When George Washington was eleven years old his father died suddenly, and his mother became like father and mother both to him. Every day she gathered her children around her and taught them about God and about the need of right-doing. George never forgot his mother's help. He kept all his life the book from which she taught him; and you can see it still at Mount

Vernon. In his copy book he wrote many a good motto, such as "Sleep not when others speak," "Sit not when others stand," "Speak not when you should hold your peace."

Abraham Lincoln said that all he was he owed to his mother's patient, loving teaching when he was a boy.

What patience mothers have! Did you ever stop to think about it? Did you ever think how many things your mother taught you—out of life, out of books, and out of the Bible? Many of you have beautiful pictures that will always remain with you of how your mother told you Bible stories, especially the stories of Jesus and his life here on earth.

Let us stop just a minute and see how many things our mothers do teach us. Begin at the very beginning: To eat—yes I think most of us were taught to handle spoon and fork and knife by our mothers; to walk; to talk; to dress ourselves; to wash our faces and hands; to help about the house; perhaps how to play our first games. And so many other things! Think of the love and the patience that went into this teaching! I'm afraid we were not always good learners; we were slow, or we were cross or "spunky."

Did you ever say, "Thank you," to your mother for all the things she taught you? Try it to-day when you go home, and see if she isn't pleased—and perhaps a little surprised.

Jesus' mother has always been thought of as the ideal mother, the purest and wisest and kindest and most loving mother that ever a boy had. That is why so

many artists of all lands and all ages have painted and sculptured their idea of Mary, the mother of Jesus. They have always put their very best thought and talent into these pictures—"Madonnas," we call them, from the two Italian words which mean, "My lady."

Can you name for me some of the famous Madonnas? The Sistine Madonna, painted by Raphael, is perhaps the best known. But Raphæl, one of the greatest of all the great Italian painters, also painted at least a dozen other beautiful pictures of the Madonna and Jesus. La Madonna della Sedia is one. Can some one who knows Italian translate that for me? "The Madonna of the Chair," is correct, for in this picture the Madonna is seated in a chair. Botticelli also painted many pictures of the Madonna, as did Leonardo da Vinci. Michelangelo is said to have painted ninety-nine Madonnas. What a wonderful thing to be an Italian and be able to claim all these marvelous artists as fellow countrymen! I wonder if some of the boys and girls in our Daily Vacation Bible School may not some day become great artists and also paint a Madonna.

Yes, Mary was wonderful, but there came a time when her Son was wiser and more wonderful than she. She knew, of course, that he was no ordinary boy, because she kept in her heart and pondered all the strange things told her before and at his birth. Yet when the time came for Jesus to leave the home where he had spent thirty happy, busy years, she could not understand. She loved and trusted him, but she thought it

strange that he should leave his home to wander about preaching and teaching. At one time she even tried to call him back. But Jesus loved and honored her none the less, although he had to tell her that he must be about his Father's business. Almost his last thought as he was dying on the cross was for her; you remember how he told John, the beloved disciple, to take care of her and treat her as his own mother.

Now if we use our opportunities aright, we shall perhaps some day become wiser in some things, than our mothers. This time may come when we are grown men and women. It may be that, under God's leadership, we shall be called upon to do things which our mothers won't understand. But if we are sure that the things we are doing are approved by God we must go on doing them. Even then let us never, never speak contemptuously or slightingly or disrespectfully of our mothers. We may have opportunities that they have never had. They have taught us all they could of what they knew, and have started us in life. Some day we may know how to speak better English than our mothers, or we may know more history and mathematics, we may be able to wear finer clothes. Yet, even if we live to be as old as Methusaleh, we can never know more than our mothers know of love and self-sacrifice and patience.

Let us love and honor our mothers therefore, even as Jesus loved and honored Mary. Let us tell them once in a while that we love them and appreciate all they have done for us.

Let us all stand, quietly, in token of our love for our mothers, while I repeat the beautiful prayer written by one who loved his mother and honored her through all his years as one of the great professors of the country: "O God, we offer thee praise and benediction for the sweet ministries of motherhood in human life. We bless thee for our own dear mothers who built up our lives by theirs . . . We thank thee for their tireless love, for their voiceless prayers, . . . for the Christly power of sacrifice and redemption in mother-love. We pray thee to forgive us if in thoughtless selfishness we have taken their love as our due without giving the tenderness which they craved as their sole reward. And if the great treasure of a mother's life is still spared to us, may we do for her feebleness what she did for ours." —*Walter Rauschenbusch, in "Prayers of the Social Awakening."*

LESSON VI

STORIES JESUS' MOTHER TOLD HIM: RUTH, THE IMMIGRANT GIRL

LESSON MATERIAL: The Book of Ruth.

MEMORY VERSE: "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Ruth 1:16.

PURPOSE: To show the beauty of loving loyalty, and also that character and not race are regarded by God when he uses people in his work.

We have seen that Mary was Jesus' first teacher, and that lovingly and patiently she taught him all she could about God and about his country. In the next few

lessons we shall learn some of the stories that Jesus' mother probably told him as soon as he was old enough to understand them.

I think that one of the very first stories she told him must have been about Ruth, who was one of his own ancestors, the great-grandmother of David, Israel's greatest king—Ruth, an immigrant girl, whose love and loyalty made it possible for God to use her in such an important place in his plan for the world.

I think it must have been at the time of the barley harvest that Mary told Jesus about Ruth. Perhaps she took him out on the hillside near their home in Nazareth. Sitting down on a rock she pointed to the men who were cutting the barley, and to those who were binding it into bundles, and to still others, women and girls for the most part, who were following after all these others, picking up here and there the stray stalks of barley which the others had left—"gleaners," they are called. They were poor people, very poor, who tried in this way to eke out their small stock of food. (Show Millet's picture of The Gleaners if possible, and explain the picture.) Now Ruth, as we shall see, became a gleaner.

Let us think of the story Mary told Jesus. Naomi was a woman of Bethlehem, the town where Jesus was born. She lived many hundred years before Jesus. When hard times came in Bethlehem, and there was no food there, she went with her husband and two sons down to Moab for there was plenty to eat in Moab. Now Moab was not so many miles distant from the

land of Israel, but it was far, far away in religion and customs. In Moab, Naomi's two sons married two Moabitish girls, named Orpah and Ruth. Later, perhaps in some plague which swept over the land, Naomi's husband and her two sons died, and she and her two daughters-in-law were left alone.

Sad at heart, lonely, and in a strange land, Naomi began to think about the old home in Bethlehem, she longed to be back. So she told Orpah and Ruth that she was going to her friends and her country again. They wept and probably tried to dissuade her. But she was resolute. So the two younger women went with her a short distance. Somewhere not far outside of the city, she stopped, and bade them return to their homes, that she might make the journey alone. Orpah, who loved her very much, clung to her in a last farewell embrace, and then sadly returned to her friends and home.

But Ruth refused to leave Naomi, in spite of her entreaties. Naomi told her how poor they would be in Bethlehem; how different were the customs and ideas there, and how the people of Bethlehem worshiped a different God, the one true God. "Return," she said, "and live among familiar friends." But Ruth, in the beautiful words of our Memory Verse for to-day, declared that she would not return, but would go with Naomi to Bethlehem. (Quote Memory Verse.)

So back they went, Naomi was returning to familiar scenes and faces, but Ruth was going to strange scenes and faces and customs.

She was an immigrant girl. Apparently the people of Bethlehem did not at first receive Naomi and Ruth very cordially. Naomi was very, very poor, and Ruth was a stranger. It seems to be human nature to look down upon and even despise those who are strangers, who wear different clothes and who speak a different language, or speak our own language brokenly. But Naomi and Ruth quietly accepted the situation and went about their daily work earnestly and humbly.

Soon after their return, the barley harvest began. Naomi sent Ruth out into the fields to glean after the reapers. (Explain gleaning.) It happened that Ruth went to the field of a rich man named Boaz, who turned out to be a distant relative of Naomi's dead husband. It was not long before Boaz noticed the immigrant girl, who was quietly and patiently gleaning after his reapers, apparently paying no attention to the jokes and remarks made at her expense by the young men and young women in the field.

Boaz asked who she was. "It's Ruth, the Moabitish girl, who came back with Naomi," was the reply. Apparently she was well known, and her modesty and quiet loyalty to her mother-in-law had begun to make an impression upon the people of Bethlehem. Boaz went to her at once, and told her to stay in his field to glean and not to go elsewhere. He told the young men to stop teasing and bothering her, and even hinted to them that they should occasionally drop a few stalks of barley for her.

"Why have I found favor in thy sight, that thou

shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a foreigner?" Ruth asked Boaz. And Boaz answered: "It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people that thou knewest not heretofore. Jehovah recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of Jehovah, the God of Israel."

At dinner time Boaz told Ruth to come and eat with the reapers, and again he told the reapers to be kind to her.

You can imagine the joy with which Ruth went home to Naomi that night and showed her the quantity of barley she had gathered and told her of Boaz's kindness to her.

All the rest of the barley harvest Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz. We may be sure that Boaz often talked with her, and it was not long before he fell very deeply in love with this quiet, loyal, modest, immigrant girl.

At the end of the harvest Boaz wished to make Ruth his wife. This was a very great honor, for Boaz was wealthy and prominent in Bethlehem. "All the city of my people" he told her "doth know that thou art a worthy woman"—a pretty fine testimony as to the character of this immigrant girl from Moab.

But there was a man in Bethlehem who was a nearer relative to Naomi than Boaz was, and Boaz knew that the Jewish laws required that the nearest relative should pay off the mortgage on any land of a kinsman who had

died and should marry the heir to the owner of the land. Boaz loved Ruth and wished to marry her, but he respected the laws, and so he made his plans in a legal way.

One morning he went to the city gate, which was the meeting place for the people, where the courts were held and business transacted. He sat there until this nearest relative of Naomi's came by, and called to him: "Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here." And "such a one" did so, while Boaz told him about the land that had belonged to Naomi's husband, and how the law required the nearest relative to redeem it for her. "Such a one" readily agreed to do that. "But there is one thing more," said Boaz—and we can imagine how his heart beat fast with anxious fear as he said this—"there is one thing more; he who redeems the land must also marry Ruth, the heir to the land, in order that the family may be continued." "That is different," said "such a one." "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar my own inheritance: take thou my right of redemption on thee; for I cannot redeem it." How Boaz's heart must have leaped with joy when he heard this! He called to the elders and to all the people at the gate to be witnesses of what was taking place. "Such a one" drew off his shoe and gave it to Boaz as a sign that he had turned over to Boaz all his rights in the land and in Ruth. A strange custom, was it not?

So Boaz redeemed the land for Naomi and took Ruth as his wife. The elders and the people congratulated them in a very beautiful way, that showed how Ruth's

modesty and loyalty had won them over. "We are witnesses they said. Jehovah make the woman that is come into thy house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel."

The very last scene of all in this story of Ruth, the loyal immigrant girl, shows us Naomi, now a grandmother, holding the little son of Boaz and Ruth in her arms, while the neighbor women congratulate her: "And let his name be famous in Israel. And he shall be unto thee a restorer of life and a nourisher of thine old age; for thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him." The baby's name was Obed, who became the father of Jesse, who was the father of King David.

Jesus' mother taught him, from this beautiful story of Ruth the loyal, that God loves everyone alike, native or immigrant, and that character alone counts; that modesty and loving helpfulness and loyalty are blessed of God and loved by men.

LESSON VII

STORIES JESUS' MOTHER TOLD HIM: DAVID, THE FAITHFUL

LESSON MATERIAL: I Sam., chs. 16 to 18.
MEMORY VERSE:

"Jehovah is my light and my salvation;
Whom shall I fear?
Jehovah is the strength of my life;
Of whom shall I be afraid?"

Ps. 27: 1.

PURPOSE: To show that true kingliness and worth consist in doing faithfully and well our daily tasks, no matter how humble.

Another story that Jesus' mother certainly told him was the story of Ruth's great-grandson, Jesus' greatest ancestor, King David. It may be that she was led to tell this story by the sight of some shepherd boys with their flocks, when she was walking with Jesus through the fields near Nazareth, for the first we know of David was when he was a shepherd boy. The very same things that made him a good shepherd, later made him the greatest of Israel's kings.

Jesus in his stories (parables) and sermons often speaks of shepherds, both good and bad. David must often have been in his mind as a good shepherd. Do you remember the beautiful poem David wrote about God as a shepherd? Psalm 23. And do you remember the beautiful words of Jesus when, as a man, he wanted to tell the people how he loved and cared for them, and pictured himself as the Good Shepherd? John 10: 14-16.

When Saul, the first king of Israel, had sinned, and God had rejected him from being king over Israel, he sent Samuel, the aged prophet who had served him so long and so faithfully, down to Bethlehem to anoint another king. God told him to go to the house of Jesse and anoint one of the sons of Jesse. Now Jesse had eight sons, as well as two daughters, and David was the youngest son. When Samuel came into Jesse's house and asked to see his sons, Jesse proudly called the seven older boys, and placed them before the aged prophet. And as Samuel looked at one after another of them, tall, sturdy, fine-looking young men, he thought surely that

this one, then that one, was he whom God had chosen to be king. But God whispered to him: "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature; . . . for Jehovah seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but Jehovah looketh on the heart."

And so Samuel sadly shook his head at all seven of these fine lads, and asked, "Are here all thy children?" "There remaineth yet the youngest," said Jesse, "and, behold, he is keeping the sheep." So Samuel told Jesse to send for David.

Now keeping the sheep was not an easy, nor a safe, nor a pleasant, task. It was usually given to the slaves or the servants, or, wherever the family was too poor to afford these, as was apparently the case with Jesse, the youngest son was sent out to do it. Families have a way of making youngest sons do the disagreeable tasks about the house and elsewhere! So David, the youngest son, was out on the hills watching his father's sheep. Let's visit him there, before he comes into the house to be anointed king by Samuel.

Here he is, way up on top of a lonely hill, far away from any houses or any other human beings. Grazing peacefully, safely, on the hillside are the sheep, confident that the young shepherd will lead them where there are green pastures in which to feed and where there is still water to drink; that he will keep all enemies away from them; that when they fall and hurt themselves, or when the little lambs become tired out, he will anoint their heads with healing oil. David was a good shepherd,

you see, who loved his sheep and would give his life for them if necessary.

Do you ever have tasks to do that seem disagreeable? Perhaps you have had to carry up the coal, or split the kindling, or wash the dishes, or sweep the floor, or something else of the same kind that seems to you unpleasant. How did you do this disagreeable task? Honest now! Did you grumble and complain about how you didn't see why they always "picked on" you? Or ask why brother or sister or some one else couldn't do it? Or did you do it cheerfully and well, as David did his hard and disagreeable task?

For David did not shirk his work, hard and dangerous and lonely as it was. There were wild beasts around who tried to steal the sheep. A lion came at least once and also a bear. And David tells us that when he saw the lamb in the mouth of the lion he went after it (how would you like to chase a lion without any gun?) and struck it and delivered the lamb, and then, when the lion charged at David, he caught it by the beard and struck and killed it. The same thing happened to the bear. You see tending sheep isn't always the peaceful task that poets like to sing about. But David learned courage out there on the hills, and that helped him later to face the giant Goliath, and, still later, his enemies, the Philistines, in battle.

But a great deal of the time, of course, David had not much to do. Lions and bears didn't come every day, and usually the sheep were safe enough. So David found plenty of idle time on his hands. How do you

spend your idle time? Do you know how David spent his?

He learned to play the harp and to sing. He wrote beautiful songs, like the Shepherd Psalm, and sang them out there in the wilderness. So well did he practice that later, when he was called to court, he was able to sing and play so sweetly that he drove away the spirit of melancholy from King Saul. And it was David, you remember, who wrote many of the psalms, which were the songs used by the Jews in their Temple, and which have helped people ever since by their beauty and their faith in God.

So David worked hard and faithfully at the task given him to do; and he used his spare moments to good advantage. When opportunity came to him he was ready for it. That is the way all really great men have had to do—Lincoln for example, splitting logs, a hard, tiresome, task, all day long, and then lying in front of the fireplace all evening reading and studying such books as he could get; or Charles Lamb, the great English writer, working all day at a bookkeeper's desk in London, a task he hated but which he did faithfully and well, and then using his free hours to study and to write the essays and books which delight us all to-day.

I like to think, though, of course, I have no means of knowing that it is so, that the picture of David, the shepherd lad, tending the sheep and singing and playing, was a help and an inspiration to Jesus as he worked long, hard hours at his carpenter's bench, and then used his few free hours for study and thinking about God, his

heavenly Father. For Jesus was ready, as was David, when God finally called him to leave his humble task, and become a King—the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

You remember we left Samuel and Jesse in Bethlehem waiting for David. Here he comes, "ruddy, and withal of a beautiful countenance, and goodly to look upon." And God told Samuel that this was he whom he should anoint king of Israel. So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David in the midst of his brethren, and we read that "the Spirit of Jehovah came mightily upon David from that day forward."

About the rest of David's life we haven't time to talk very much. But you all know the story: How David went down to the camp of the Israelites, and found that great giant, Goliath, who was ready to fight any Israelite; how none of the Israelites dared go out against him; how David the shepherd lad, volunteered; how the people laughed at him until he told them about the lion and the bear; how King Saul lent him his armor, which, however, David found he could not use, as he was not accustomed to it; how he chose five smooth stones out of the brook, took his sling, with which he had defended his sheep on the hills, and in spite of the taunts of Goliath, went out boldly and slew him, and put to flight the army of the Philistines; how for a time, until Saul became jealous and drove him from the court, David played and sang for the king, or fought great battles for him; how he and Saul's son, Jonathan, became fast friends so that their names are

forever linked together as an example of truest and highest friendship; how David finally became king, conquered his enemies round about, built Jerusalem into a great and beautiful capital for his nation, and ruled wisely, so that his name, even to-day, stands out as that of the greatest and best king Israel ever had—in spite of certain terrible sins and mistakes for which he humbly repented. All these things we must pass over.

For it is after all, David the shepherd lad, out of the hills of Judah, who is most important to us—as, I think, to Jesus, also. Just as what you do to-day, at work or at play, and the spirit in which you do it, are determining what kind of man or woman you will be when you get older, and whether you will be ready for some great opportunity if it comes. David was ready, and became a great king. Jesus was ready, and became the Saviour of us all.

LESSON VIII

STORIES JESUS' MOTHER TOLD HIM: JEREMIAH, THE PERSISTENT

LESSON MATERIAL: The Book of Jeremiah.

MEMORY VERSE: "And let us not be weary in well-doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Gal. 6: 9.

PURPOSE: To teach persistency in right doing and living, even in the face of derision and persecution.

One day, after Jesus had been preaching for some time and performing many miracles, he asked his disciples who people thought he was. And they told him

that many people thought he was Jeremiah, while others thought he was Elijah. Both Jeremiah and Elijah were great prophets in Old Testament times, whose lives have made a very great impression upon people ever since. Jesus must, therefore, in some ways have resembled these two great heroes. They would naturally be among those about whom his mother told him in his boyhood days in Nazareth.

The time she told him about Jeremiah, whom people wrongly call the "weeping prophet," may have been some afternoon when he came home from his play feeling a bit hurt because some of his companions refused to play, or wouldn't play fairly, and perhaps made fun of him because he insisted on playing fairly. For Jesus all his life was mocked and called names by people who didn't like his insisting on honesty and purity and godliness.

Perhaps sometimes you have tried to insist that a game shall be played squarely, and your playmates have laughed at you, and you have felt hurt; perhaps you have thought: "Oh, what's the use? Everyone seems to be doing it that way; guess I might as well." That's the time to think about Jeremiah, and especially, of course, about Jesus, both of whom refused to become "weary in well-doing," as our Memory Verse for to-day puts it.

Jeremiah lived about six hundred years before Christ, at a time when things were all topsy-turvy in Israel; men were leading wicked lives, and other men were in misery and want, without enough to eat or wear and

without houses to live in. The storekeepers and the business men cheated by charging too much for their goods and by false weights and measures, just as unfortunately they do sometimes to-day. There was a great deal of drunkeness and impurity of life, and even murders were common. The judges in the courts were corrupt, the poor man finding it impossible to get justice, while the rich man was able, by bribing the judges, to seize houses and lands through mortgage foreclosure and other processes. People seemed to have forgotten God entirely.

Altogether it was a pretty desperate time, this time in which Jeremiah lived. But God never forgets, and never withdraws from human affairs. He lets men choose their own way, although he warns them and urges them to choose the right way. But when men, having chosen the wrong way, get too wicked, and affairs get too bad, then it is that God calls some unusually strong man to speak for him, or sets in motion certain remarkable events which bring confusion and dismay to the workers of evil.

So it was that he called Jeremiah. We don't know much about Jeremiah before God called him. We wish that we knew more. All we know is that one day when Jeremiah had become a young man—he called himself a child to be sure, but that was just part of his modesty —God spoke to him. Jeremiah had been thinking a long time about all the evils around him and perhaps wondering why God didn't do something about it. So when God spoke to him one day about these conditions,

it didn't seem so strange. The only strange thing was that God should have spoken to him, Jeremiah.

Jeremiah seems to have been a timid man, who wanted to have people love him and think well of him, and who hated trouble and misunderstanding—just like most folks. He didn't want to be a hero, and no doubt would have preferred to stay quietly in his home, doing his work honestly and well, and letting some one else do the reforming and the preaching.

But God said: "Jeremiah, I have been watching over you and planning for you. And I have planned that you shall be my prophet before the nations." Jeremiah was astonished and afraid. "Why," he said, "I am just a child. I cannot do this thing. I cannot stand before kings and wicked men and denounce their wrongs and try to lead them right. That is a job for a big, strong, heroic soul."

But God had made his plans, and he told Jeremiah that it was not for him to say; God would put words into his mouth and would tell him where to go and what to say. "Be not afraid," he told Jeremiah; "for I am with thee to deliver thee."

So Jeremiah, this timid, shrinking man, began the career that has made him one of the greatest heroes of earth. He stood before kings and before wicked men and denounced them to their faces. He told them that they must stop oppressing the poor, and cease their drunkenness and impure living, and a good many other things.

Of course, people began to hate him very heartily.

Evil men always hate good men who dare to denounce them. A certain minister in one of our eastern cities dared from his pulpit to denounce certain very great evils in his city. Immediately he received threats: He would be killed; terrible things would happen to his family. But men of God are not to be frightened. It is the wicked who flee, even when no man pursues them.

So Jeremiah was threatened with death and with imprisonment. Even the priests in the Temple seized him once and told him, "Thou shalt surely die." They took him before the princes to have him put to death. But Jeremiah stood firm, telling them, "Amend your ways and your doings, and obey the voice of Jehovah your God; . . . But as for me, behold, I am in your hand: do with me as is good and right in your eyes." Because of his very boldness and his very evident rightness, he was released this time.

Another time he was not so fortunate. He kept on insisting that people should amend their ways and their doings. And he told the king that unless he and all the nation repented God would deliver them over to their enemies, the Babylonians. This sounded like treason, though it was only the truth. Any nation that persists in sin will surely perish. The king didn't like such talk, of course. So he shut Jeremiah up in prison. But even in prison Jeremiah did not keep still. He continued to send out messages calling upon the nation to repent and to turn from evil.

After Jeremiah had been preaching for about twenty years, God suggested to him that he should write out

all his sermons and speeches in a book and have it read before the people. Jeremiah did this, and since he could not go to the house of God to read it himself, he told his secretary, Baruch, who did the actual writing while Jeremiah dictated, to go out and read the book before the people. Baruch did as Jeremiah commanded, reading the book in the Temple. When the king heard of it he sent for the book. After three or four pages had been read to him, he seized it, cut it to pieces with his penknife, and threw it into the fire. So all of Jeremiah's work was destroyed.

Do you think so? Oh, no, Jeremiah was not weary in well-doing. He secured another roll of paper, and he and Baruch patiently wrote out the whole book again.

Then came a new king, Zedekiah, who asked Jeremiah to pray, because the enemies were close at the gates. Even bad men want good men to pray for them when trouble is at hand. The city was delivered, for the time, but the people continued to be just as wicked as before. It was not long before Jeremiah was in prison again, this time in a dark dungeon. Again the king released him, but, of course, Jeremiah would not stop preaching. So his enemies put him again into a dungeon, this time so deep that he had to be let down with cords, and he sank into the mud and mire in the darkness. Enough to discourage almost anyone, was it not? The king, however, seemed to have a soft spot somewhere in his heart—perhaps his conscience troubled him. For again he ordered Jeremiah to be released

from the dungeon, though he still kept him under guard.

And so it happened all through Jeremiah's life. Faithful, though his heart was breaking, he kept on denouncing evil and calling on his fellow countrymen to turn to God and to do right. Finally, as he had predicted would happen if they persisted in their sin, the city was captured by the Chaldeans, who, however, spared Jeremiah, so he continued to preach and teach.

Just what became of this faithful hero of God we do not know. Tradition says that he went down into Egypt with the Jewish refugees, and there continued to tell them about God and to urge them to repent, until finally he was put to death by these people whom he had so long tried to help. His "reaping" was not in this life, but because he never became weary nor stopped doing God's will, he is living forever with God, and his influence still helps men to do right even in the face of danger and death.

In this way at least, as well as in many others, Jesus was like Jeremiah, so that the people were not wholly wrong when they thought that he was Jeremiah himself.

LESSON IX

STORIES JESUS' MOTHER TOLD HIM: ELIJAH, THE HEROIC

LESSON MATERIAL: I Kings, chs. 16 to 19.

MEMORY VERSE: "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts." Zech. 4: 6.

PURPOSE: To show that God speaks and works, not only in the great events of life, but in the quietness and stillness of our ordinary lives.

Some people thought that Jesus was not Jeremiah, but another Old Testament prophet. Do you remember, from yesterday's lesson, who this other prophet was? Elijah. Let us see if we can find in what way Jesus was like Elijah, and what in Elijah's life must have impressed and helped him as his mother told him the story.

The first we see of Elijah, who lived many years before Jeremiah, is when he is standing before King Ahab, one of the richest, and also most powerful and wicked, of the kings of Israel. Ahab not only turned away from God but he built altars for other gods, and especially for Baal, and as the Bible tells us, "did yet more to provoke Jehovah, the God of Israel, to anger than all the kings of Israel that were before him." It was because of Ahab's wickedness that God sent Elijah to warn him.

So Elijah suddenly appeared before the king, spoke just one sentence, and then disappeared. But it was a terrible sentence: "As Jehovah, the God of Israel, liveth, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, but according to my word."

Can you think what would happen in a country where there was no rain for many years? Nothing would grow, of course. There would be no vegetables, no fruit, no grain; by and by the brooks and the rivers would begin to dry up and the horses and sheep and cattle would die, and at last the people would have no water to drink or food to eat and thousands upon thousands would die for lack of food and lack of water.

That is just what happened in Israel. Finally King Ahab called the chief steward, Obadiah, and told him to search all through the land "unto all the fountains of water, and unto all the brooks: peradventure we may find grass and save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts. So they divided the land between them to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself."

Where was Elijah during these terrible years? God was taking care of him. First he lived for a while near the brook Cherith, where there was water to drink and where ravens brought him food. When lack of rain caused the brook to dry up, God sent him to the home of a widow woman in the town of Zarephath, and there, though she and her son were using up their last bit of oil and meal when Elijah came to her, God supplied them with plenty all through the years of drought and famine. And when the little boy died, Elijah was able to restore him to life, causing the widow to exclaim, "Now I know that thou art a man of God, and that the word of Jehovah in thy mouth is truth."

Meanwhile Ahab had searched all through his land and other lands for Elijah, but without success. Elijah stayed in Zarephath until God told him to go back to Ahab. As he was going back he met Obadiah, the chief steward, on his search for water. Obadiah was a good man, but he was much terrified at the sudden sight of Elijah. He was afraid that while he went to tell Ahab that Elijah was found, Elijah would disappear again and the king would kill him. But Elijah

reassured him and waited until Obadiah brought the king.

When Ahab saw Elijah, what do you think he said? Did he ask Elijah to pray to God for forgiveness and for the ending of the drought? Not at all. He was too wicked and hard-hearted for that. He said, "Is it thou, thou troubler of Israel?" And Elijah boldly replied, "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of Jehovah, and thou hast followed the Baalim."

Then followed a strange and wonderful scene. Elijah told Ahab to get together all the priests of Baal and bring them up on Mount Carmel. There he challenged them to a strange duel. They and he were each to build an altar and each was to ask his own God to send down fire from heaven to light it. Elijah gave the priests the first chance. All day long they prayed, shouting and dancing, even cutting themselves with knives in their desperation, but no fire came. Finally in the evening, Elijah took his turn. When he had prepared his sacrifice, he prayed to God, "O Jehovah, the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Israel, . . . hear me, that this people may know that thou, Jehovah, art God, and that thou hast turned their heart back again." And fire came down and burned up the altar as well as the sacrifice that was upon it. And the priests of Baal were slain by the enraged people, who realized then how they had been imposed upon.

And then Elijah said a remarkable thing. Remember that there had been no rain for many years, and the

sky was blue and cloudless. But Elijah told Ahab to go and eat for there was "the sound of abundance of rain." Ahab must have thought Elijah was losing his mind, for there was not a cloud to be seen. But Elijah went up to the top of Carmel to pray. He told his servant to watch the sky out over the Mediterranean Sea. At first there was just the infinite blue heaven, but finally the servant reported a small cloud, no larger than a man's hand. Then Elijah told Ahab to hurry home before the storm should overtake him. So Ahab mounted his chariot and Elijah ran on before him all the way through the storm, for "the heavens grew black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain."

Now Ahab's wicked queen, who was a Baal worshiper, was very angry when she heard what had happened, and she threatened to kill Elijah when he came with Ahab to the palace. So Elijah turned away and ran for his life. After all that had been done to turn everyone back to God, poor Elijah was pretty well discouraged. Perhaps he felt that it was all useless. But God had a lesson to teach him—a lesson which must have deeply impressed Jesus as he heard the story, and which ought to help us.

Day after day Elijah ran away, forgetting how God had cared for him and protected him during the years of famine, until he came to Mount Horeb, called the mountain of God. Here God spoke to him, after Elijah had complained of the uselessness of it all. "Go forth," said God, "and stand upon the mount before Jehovah."

And Elijah stood out on the mountain, doubtless expecting some great and wonderful sign.

And a terrible windstorm came up; great trees were blown down, and it seemed as though everything must be blown away. "Surely," thought Elijah, "God is going to use this wind to punish the wicked in Israel." But God was not in the wind.

And after the wind, came an earthquake, which made the whole earth tremble and shake. But God was not in the earthquake. Then followed a fearful fire, sweeping all before it, but God was not in the fire. I can imagine that Elijah was quite bewildered.

Then, suddenly, he heard a still, small voice, speaking to him, and he knew that this was God. He wrapped his face in his mantle and stood and listened reverently. And God's voice gave him new courage and a new mission, sent him out into danger again, to be sure, but hereafter he was never afraid, because he had learned a great lesson. Do you know what it was?

It was this: That while occasionally God does work through great and terrible events, these are exceptions. Most of his work is done through the still, small voice, speaking to us in our ordinary lives, and telling us to go bravely, quietly, patiently about the work he gives us to do. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith Jehovah of hosts." Elijah learned that, after all, God is a Spirit, and that his work must be done in the hearts and lives of men.

People have sometimes thought that they could make others good by compelling them to believe this or that

or to do certain things in certain ways. The terrible Spanish Inquisition, as it was called, was like this. People were told that unless they became Roman Catholic they would be tortured in terrible ways, and killed. And they were. And sometimes, I am sorry to say, whole nations have been compelled to become Christians or be slain. But that is not God's way, of course. Only when wickedness has become so terrible and men so obstinate that they will not listen to his messengers, does God resort to unusual means. Most of God's work is done in the ordinary quiet way of life.

People again and again tried to get Jesus to give some great and miraculous sign by which they would know that he was sent from God. But he always refused. He knew that only those who were really convinced inwardly by the Spirit of God, would be true followers. He learned, as Elijah learned, and as we all must learn sometime (for so long as we have wars and fighting we have not learned it) that peace and satisfaction come only through inward conviction.

A certain Japanese statesman who advocated reform measures was much hated by his opponents. One day as he was sitting in his house several men forced their way into the room and told him that they had come to kill him. He arose and went to the door, though they were watching to see that he did not escape or give a warning. But he quietly locked the door, with them and himself on the inside! Putting the key in his pocket, he asked them to sit down, and for several hours he talked to them. At last he arose, unlocked the door,

and let them out; he had converted them to his party! That was much better than fighting with them and having them arrested and convicted, was it not? It was his spirit working with theirs, you see.

So we ought to ask God to speak to us day by day as we go about our work and play, tell us what is right and what is wrong for us to do, and show us his plan for our lives, instead of waiting for some big and unusual sign or event.

LESSON X

STORIES JESUS' MOTHER TOLD HIM: ISAIAH, THE TRUE SEER

LESSON MATERIAL: Isaiah, chs. 53 to 66.

MEMORY VERSE: "He that is the greater among you, let him become as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve." Luke 22: 26.

PURPOSE: To show that the spirit of love and service and not the spirit of conquest is pleasing to God.

I want you to "suppose" this morning. Do you like to suppose? Most boys and girls do. They like to suppose that they had a million dollars, or owned a big yacht, or were President, or a general, or an admiral, or something like that. But I am going to ask you to suppose something quite different, and something that really is not supposable at all.

Suppose that we had not won this last war, but that all our allies and ourselves had been defeated by Germany and Austria. Then suppose that Germany and Austria sent an invading army over here to the United

States, destroyed most of our big cities, and plundered and carried back home all the gold and silver and works of art they could; suppose, still further, that they took all our prominent men and women, our governors and congressmen and senators and judges and our President and his cabinet, and a great many more, and carried them back as captives to Germany; suppose that over the rest of us who were not important enough to carry away they appointed a harsh and cruel ruler, such as they appointed over Belgium, who taxed us, and worked us, and punished us frightfully. Suppose that this lasted year after year, and year after year. What should we look for? Some one to come and deliver us, should we not? Some great general at the head of a mighty army, who would march upon our conquerors and drive them out, restoring the land to us, its rightful owners, and again setting up our own form of government. Shouldn't we eagerly, desperately, long for such a man to come?

In Jesus' time the Jews were exactly in that condition, and had been for many, many years. First the Greeks and then the Romans had conquered them, in spite of their heroic struggles and in spite of frequent rebellions such as that of the Maccabees. The Jews all these years had been looking for a deliverer, who should "restore the kingdom to Israel." The prophets had promised such a deliverer, and the people, though often discouraged, still longed and prayed for the Messiah, the Redeemer, the Deliverer. Each Jewish family secretly hoped that some son of theirs might become the Re-

deemer. Mary and Joseph, Jesus' father and mother, as pious Jews, shared this hope of course. And they must often have looked at Jesus with puzzled inquiry, because of the marvelous things which had happened at his birth.

One of the stories which Mary no doubt told Jesus had a great deal to do with the Redeemer who should come, though the Redeemer pictured in this story was not the kind of Redeemer most people were expecting. The story was that of the last chapters of Isaiah, the greatest of Old Testament prophets. It told of the kind of Redeemer Jesus really was, though the people of his own day were so prejudiced in favor of a military deliverer that most of them failed to recognize Jesus as the Redeemer sent by God to save them, not from Roman rule only but from the rule of Satan as well.

Here is a picture of Israel's Redeemer as drawn by Isaiah, and as Jesus learned it, probably from his mother's lips:

The Redeemer, said Isaiah, should be a suffering servant—not a great general at all! He should be "despised, and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." Although he was suffering and serving for the sins and the troubles of all the nations, in order that the nation through him might be saved, yet the people would esteem him not; they would think that he was "smitten of God" for some great sin of his own. They would so hate him that they would finally put him to death, "although he had done no violence,

neither was any deceit in his mouth," just because they could not understand him and his methods.

A strange way to receive a Redeemer, was it not? But remember the Israelites were looking for a great military leader, as most of us should be looking, if all the "supposes" we have supposed to-day were true.

Then Isaiah went on to tell what the Redeemer should do, instead of leading armies. He should preach good tidings to the meek (or the poor); he should comfort and bind up broken hearts; he should set free prisoners and release captives that were bound; he should tell men about God's love and favor, as well as of his justice and judgment of evil; he should comfort the mourners, or in Isaiah's own beautiful words, "give unto them . . . the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness"—surely a wonderful mission.

What did Isaiah mean by such a picture? The Jews must often have pondered over it all, but without understanding its message. Even when Jesus himself, in the synagogue at Nazareth, where he had been brought up, read this wonderful passage, and told the people, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears," even then they did not understand. In fact, they became so angry at him that they tried to seize him and throw him from a precipice near the town.

A little more than a hundred years ago, Napoleon Bonaparte, who is believed by many to be the greatest general who ever lived, conquered almost all of Europe and some of Africa and Asia, and dreamed of ruling

over the whole Eastern world. But this same Napoleon once said: "Alexander and Cæsar and I have each ruled over world empires. We have commanded great armies, and millions of people have served us. But Alexander's empire and Cæsar's empire vanished almost with their deaths; mine will doubtless do likewise. Jesus Christ, without an army, with no one to serve him, with no military or political position, founded an empire which is greater than any of ours, and which instead of ending with his death, began to grow only at his death, and the longer the time since his death, the greater does his empire become." And then Napoleon gave the reason: "Our empires have been founded upon force and held together by force. But the empire of Jesus is founded upon love and endures by love. It needs no force."

Napoleon was right. Jesus was the Redeemer of Israel, the Messiah, the Saviour, but not of Israel alone —of all the world. And he saved, not by defeating another power by force of arms, but as Isaiah predicted he would save, by teaching and serving and bringing men to God.

Let's suppose again. Suppose that all the things we supposed at first were true. Which would be the very best way to get our freedom again? Have a great general come and lead an army through bloody battles where many men on both sides would be killed, and where women and children would suffer as they have suffered in Europe and still are suffering? Or—now think carefully, for this is a very hard "or"—patiently,

lovingly (Jesus taught us to love our enemies and do good to those who misused us) to set about to teach our conquerors by earnestly doing what was right; by showing them "a most excellent way," as Paul once put it? Suppose that after many years we succeeded, and that our conquerors and we together should all be real Christians. There wouldn't be any conquerors and conquered any more, don't you see? We'd all be one in Christ Jesus. That's a pretty hard suppose, isn't it? And yet that was exactly the kind of Redeemer that Isaiah described, a Redeemer who would save not only Israel but the whole world. It is the kind of Redeemer that Jesus came to be, and is—who conquers and saves by love and service, not by force.

Let me close with a story of how an old Negro slave put this lesson into practice. This slave had been with his Southern master some time, when a new lot of slaves fresh from Africa, were bought. The master noticed that his old slave was paying special attention to an old man among the newcomers, helping him in many ways, teaching him his new duties, waiting upon him when he was ill. "Who is that old man?" asked the master, "your father?" "Oh, no, sir, he is not my father." "Your brother?" "No, not my brother." "An uncle, or an old friend?" "No sir, no sir, that man is my worst enemy. He is the one who sold me into slavery. But I am a Christian and Jesus tells me to do good to my enemies, and make them Christians, too. And that is what I am trying to do." Wasn't that much better than beating and perhaps killing his enemy?

So Jesus accepted Isaiah's picture of the Redeemer as a picture of himself, and he set out to love and serve and be kind to all men, even to the point of dying for them.

LESSON XI

JESUS AT SCHOOL

LESSON MATERIAL: Luke 2: 41-52.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom,
And the man that getteth understanding."
Prov. 3: 13.

PURPOSE: To show how Jesus grew in wisdom through patient, faithful study, and to impress the value of study to-day.

How many of you like to go to school? That's fine. I am glad that so many do. But there are some who seem to think that they don't like school. Why, I wonder? Seats too hard? Hours too long? Lessons not interesting? Or is it laziness? Plenty of reasons you can think of when you try, are there not?

I wonder how many of you would really like to go to such a school as Jesus went to years and years ago, in Nazareth? Let us think about it. To be sure, the Bible tells us nothing directly about Jesus' ever going to school; but we know that he went, because we know that there were schools to go to, and because every good Jew has always been anxious that his son should have an education, at least enough of an education so that he can read and write the Scriptures.

Some of the old rabbis, living before Jesus, said things like this:

"A father had as well bury his son as neglect his education." (Rabbi Salomo.)

"The world exists by the breath of school children." (Rabbi Judah.)

"Our chief ambition is the education of our children." (Josephus, soon after Christ.)

We know also that all through the centuries since Christ the Jews have struggled to educate their children. Even in lands where they have been bitterly persecuted and the children have been forbidden to attend school, they have somehow or other been able to teach their children to read and write. We all know how in this country in some of the great eastern universities the Jews form a large part of the student body. It is a fine thing, this desire of the Jew to learn.

One Jewish immigrant girl has told us very pathetically and vividly of her fight for an education in Russia, where education was practically denied to the Jews. Her father kept a secret school because he could not secure a license for it, and he had to bribe the police over and over again in order to be safe from raiding. Sometimes it seemed almost hopeless, for the police demanded more and more money. Finally the idea came to Elizabeth to go to America. "I want to be free," she told her parents: "I shall go to America—a free country where everybody gets a free education. Imagine, mother, free education! I shall earn my living and study in the free evening schools—and when I establish firm ground under my feet I shall help you and father and the children. Think of the children

going to free schools, growing up to be free citizens!" (Elizabeth Hasanovitz, "One of Them," page 10.) You see how some people appreciate the privilege of living here in America and having the opportunity of going to school. This is one of the finest things the Jews are giving to America, this earnest longing for education. It is the same Jewish longing that existed in Jesus' day, and that makes us sure that he, too, went to school.

Now let us go to school with Jesus. You wouldn't recognize the room as a schoolroom at all. It is just a room—no seats, no desk for the teacher, no blackboard, no pictures on the walls, no maps, no books, no anything that we think of when we think of school. All the pupils sat in a circle on the floor, cross-legged, with the teacher in the center. Just try sitting cross-legged on the floor sometime for an hour or so, and see if your school seats don't seem soft afterwards! The teacher had the only book, for books were scarce in those days and very expensive, since they had to be written by hand. The book which the teacher had was the Bible, the Old Testament, of course. And so the school was called, "The School of the Book." Did I tell you that it was in connection with the synagogue?

And such a noise! I wonder if your teacher ever keeps you after school for whispering, or makes you write "I whispered" about a hundred times? In Jesus' school all the studying was "out loud." The teacher read from the Book, and the class repeated the words after him, very much as Jesus had learned from his

mother at home—only now he studied harder and longer parts. The Jewish children learned whole sections of the Law. Can some one tell me what the Law books in the Old Testament are? They also learned the songs. Tell me what the songs are. And they learned long sections from the prophets. Some one name the prophets for me. We have already heard the story of two prophets after whom books were named.

They started in with a review, of course—a review of that which their mothers had taught them at home. (See Lesson 5.) Let us repeat it together now. Then, of course, they learned to write, in Hebrew, or rather in the Aramaic dialect of Hebrew. Possibly they also learned the Greek language, though that is doubtful.

Jesus was a good student. How do I know? Of course, we haven't any of his report cards. Well, if I should meet some of you about ten years from now, and should talk with you for a little while, about geography, shall we say, or about English, or about arithmetic, or perhaps if I should get a letter from you, I think I could tell pretty accurately whether you had been a good student or not. Do you know how? Yes, of course. By the kind of grammar you used, and by the way you multiplied or divided or added or subtracted, or by the way you spelled the words, or by your handwriting.

And so I know that Jesus was a good student because he knew the Book so well in after years. When the Devil came to him to tempt him, Jesus knew just

what verse to quote to prove that the Devil was wrong. When he stood up in the synagogue to read, as we saw in our last lesson, he knew just where to find the passage he wanted. Many times in his life he quoted the Bible, although he probably never owned a Bible himself, as he was too poor. He must have studied hard in the "School of the Book."

You see how greatly education is prized by those who are wise and understand and how eagerly they use their opportunities.

From his earliest years, King Alfred the Great of England, who lived many centuries ago, moved in the midst of terror, with the clash and clang of arms and the din of battle ever in his ears. He was trained to fight when still a boy. He had been taught, too, to wind the horn and bend the bow, to hunt and to hawk; but at twelve years he knew nothing of letters. There were very few in those days who could read, and fewer still who could teach, and in his later life Alfred used to say that of all the hardships and misfortunes that had befallen him, there was nothing he felt so much as this idleness in his youth, when he had had both the time and the desire to learn, but could find none able to teach.

One day when Alfred was twelve years old, his mother, Osburh, showed him and his brothers a book of Anglo-Saxon poems and stories, with beautifully colored letters and pictures. There was no printing in those days, so all the books had to be carefully written and the pictures drawn by hand. Osburh told the boys

that she would give the book to the one who first learned to read it. The three older brothers looked at the pictures, but showed no further interest in it, but Alfred eagerly asked, "Will you really give that book to him who can first understand and repeat it to you?"

The promise was confirmed, and the boy carried the book away and did not rest until he was able to read the whole of it. Then Osburh gave it to him for his own, and from that day he loved reading and was never happier than when he could talk to good and wise men, whose sayings he carefully wrote down for the guidance of his life.

In after years he not only read but wrote books, and having been taught Latin, the language in which most of the books of that day were written, he translated them into English so that his people also might know the joy of reading.

You will find, if you read the lives of men who have really amounted to something in the world, that they have been men who studied and studied hard—not always in school, for many of them did not have the opportunity that you have, but they studied by themselves and with other men wiser than themselves and they carefully remembered what they had learned.

Right here is a splendid place to learn the verse that is back of all these Bible stories we have been having and are to have. Sometimes people have thought that Jesus knew everything miraculously, because he was the Son of God; that he never had to study hard, or

work hard, like other boys and men. This is a wrong idea of Jesus. He was a very real boy and man, and he grew in body and in mind and in soul, just as others have to grow, through careful, hard, patient doing. Here is the verse that tells us so plainly.

"And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." Luke 2:52. He advanced in wisdom, that is, he studied and thought. He advanced in stature. He advanced in favor with God: he was honest and fair and kind and helpful and loved and served God. He advanced in favor with men: he played and laughed and sang and had a joyous time, and helped those about him to have the same kind of time.

Jesus, you see, was a foursquare boy. Mind, body, soul, heart, all grew, just the way you and I ought to grow! If this square stands for Jesus, I wonder what kind of figure stands for some of us? This bottom line, we'll say, stands for "body," that is, health and strength. Most of us have a good line here. This perpendicular line at the right stands for mind; sometimes this is a fairly long line and sometimes it is pretty short, I'm afraid. This other perpendicular line stands for heart, that is, our relationships with each other—usually a fairly long line. Then the top line is our relationship to God—a pretty short line, I'm afraid, with most of us. See how we'll have to bend in the other two lines in order to be able to join them.

Suppose you each go home to-day and draw the kind of figure you honestly think stands for yourself. Bring

it to school to-morrow, without your name on it and carefully folded so that I shan't know whose it is, and we'll see what some of you look like—and whether, like Jesus, you are growing "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

LESSON XII

JESUS IN THE TEMPLE WITH THE WISE MEN

LESSON MATERIAL: Luke 2: 41-51.

MEMORY VERSE: "Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also." Matt. 6: 21.

PURPOSE: To show how that in which we are most interested attracts us, and develops our characters, and to show the normality of religious interest.

In this country when a young man becomes twenty-one years old, he is said to be "of age." That means that he is old enough to be his own master, to be responsible for what he says and does, to earn his own living if necessary, and to vote and hold office as a citizen of this country. It is an important time when a young man becomes twenty-one years of age.

Jewish boys became "of age" much younger than this—at twelve years. And just as you boys are looking forward to being twenty-one—and you girls, now that you can vote also—so the Jewish boys, and Jesus, looked forward to being twelve. At twelve they became "sons of the law." They were old enough to understand the Bible, and to try to keep the Law as it was written there; to go to the Temple at Jerusalem three times a year, to fast, to offer sacrifices, and

to perform all the other duties and rites of the Jews.

Imagine, then, how eagerly Jesus looked forward to the passover celebration when he was twelve years old. Then for the first time he would go with his parents up to Jerusalem and take part in all the solemn ceremonies of the seven days of the feast. How eagerly he would read and reread all that the Bible said about Jerusalem and the ceremonies, so that when he reached there he would know what to do and say—just as young men and women in this country ought to study eagerly what citizenship means, and what the ideals of this country are, so that when they reach the age of twenty-one they will know how to be good citizens.

At Jerusalem was the great Jewish "university," which was another reason why Jesus was anxious to get there. For though he had learned much from his mother and from the teacher in the "School of the Book," there were still many things that puzzled him, and he wanted an opportunity to ask the wise professors and doctors in the university about them.

So to Jerusalem Jesus went with his father and mother. It was as if you should visit London or Paris or Rome for the first time. How wide open your eyes would be, and your ears, also, to see and hear all you possibly could! On their arrival in Jerusalem, Jesus and his father went straight into the Temple, leaving Mary in the outer "court of the women." In the "inner court" of the Israelites Jesus watched the priests as they offered the sacrifices, and listened to the songs of the Temple singers, and gazed reverently at the golden

front of the Temple, which was his "Father's House."

During the days that followed Jesus had plenty of time to roam around and see all that was happening and to have some of his questions answered. He went into the classrooms and sat there with other eager boys and listened while the "doctors," or professors, lectured to them about Israel's history and about God. And he asked questions, as did the others. But the more he asked the more he thought of, until finally, when the last day of the feast had come, and his father and mother had started homeward, trusting him so much that they knew that he was safe and could take care of himself, Jesus continued to sit before the doctors, "both hearing them, and asking them questions." The teachers were amazed at his understanding, and his answers to the questions they asked him.

Joseph and Mary went a day's journey toward Nazareth, and then, since he was not in the crowd that accompanied them, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days' hunt they found him there in the Temple with the doctors. They rebuked him gently for doing as he had and causing them anxiety. Jesus' reply showed how surprised he was that they had not come to the Temple at once.

"Why, mother," he said, "did you not know that I had to be about my Father's business? You yourself taught me to think first about him and to learn all I could about him and his will for me." You see, it was the most natural place in the world for Jesus to be, because it was the place in which he was most inter-

ested. God and God's house were his treasures, and, as our Memory Verse for to-day says, "Where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also."

Folks have sometimes thought that Jesus was an infant prodigy religiously. Do you know what an infant prodigy is? Not so very long ago the newspapers were telling us about two of them. One of them, a twelve-year-old boy—the same age as Jesus when he went to the Temple—had just entered a big university; he had studied twelve different languages, and knew history and philosophy and mathematics and a number of other things. But he really wasn't an infant prodigy at all. He was a normal boy; he liked to play, and he led his class in the freshman rush; he enjoyed good times as much as anyone. These studies were just things in which he had always been interested and in which he had had some one to teach him. He was just a normal boy with these interests first.

The other so-called infant prodigy was a nine-year-old Polish boy. He was a chess player. Up at West Point he played twenty games of chess at once, with the best chess players who could be found, and he won all but one of the games, and that one was a draw. He came nearer to being an infant prodigy than the other, but even in his case it was simply that he had put chess first and had worked and studied intensely over his games. He also loved play and a good time. But chess was the thing in which he was most interested.

I wonder if most of us aren't infant prodigies in one way or another. Let me ask you a question. (Please

do not answer out loud, but just honestly to yourselves.) Suppose I were able to tell you—which I am not—that the parents of each of you had given me permission to let you go just where you wanted to go this afternoon and do just what you wanted to do. Honest, now, where would you go? Baseball game? Movies? Swimming? Picnic?

I know infant prodigies—no, let's drop that word—I know boys who can name all the players of the big league teams, who know their batting averages and the standing of the clubs and a great many other things about baseball. I feel pretty ignorant when I talk with them because they know so much more than I do about baseball.

And I know girls who have pictures of most of the "movie" actors and actresses, and who can tell me just what plays each one has played in, and what their next productions are to be. And I feel very ignorant when I talk with them, for they know so much more about the "movies" than I can ever hope to know.

And yet the baseball boys and the movie girls are just ordinary boys and girls, after all. Only their first interests seem to be baseball or the movies. And where their treasure is there is their heart also, and it is easy and natural for them to learn about these things. Do you see how it is?

And do you see how it is that Jesus, there in the Temple with the teachers, asking them questions and listening to their lectures, was just an especially normal boy, who was eager to learn all he could about that in

which he was most interested? Jesus was much more normal than the baseball boys and the movie girls, for while baseball and movies are all right in their places, their places ought not to be first. There are so many more important things in the world. And the most normal boy and girl is the one who picks out the most important thing to be interested in. Isn't that so? And the most important thing in all the world is God, and his will for us—which is just what Jesus was studying.

LESSON XIII

JESUS IN HIS HOME

LESSON MATERIAL: Matt. 13: 54-57.

MEMORY VERSE:

"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is
For brethren to dwell together in unity!"
Ps. 133: 1.

PURPOSE: To show the beauty of life in a home in which the spirit of Jesus is lived.

Does some one remember from one of our earlier lessons, or from the Bible, how many brothers and sisters Jesus had? Four brothers and at least two sisters. We know the names of the brothers, but we simply know that he had "sisters," since that is the way the Bible refers to them; perhaps there were more than two sisters, since Matthew speaks of "all" his sisters. At any rate quite a family lived together in the little one-room home in Nazareth. We wish we knew more about the home life there. The Bible tells us very little directly. Many things we can be sure of, however,

from Jesus' later life, and from what we know in general of the homes of that time.

Apparently Joseph, Jesus' earthly father, died soon after Jesus was twelve years old, as he is not mentioned after the trip to the passover feast in Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve. And since Jesus was the oldest of the children, it meant that much of the care of the rest and the support of the family fell upon his shoulders. Possibly this was one reason why he did not begin his public work of preaching until he was thirty: he had to be sure that his family was provided for before he left them.

I wonder how the days passed in the Nazareth home, how the children behaved, and what each one did to help out. There is a verse in Psalm 127 which says, "As arrows in the hand of a mighty man, so are the children of youth." Now I don't know all that the writer of that Psalm had in mind when he wrote that verse, but I do know that some arrows are good and some are bad; that some bring life and some bring death—and so do children. What kind of arrows, I wonder, were Jesus' brothers and sisters?

Do you remember the story of William Tell? William Tell was a very skillful archer who lived in Switzerland when that country was ruled by Austria. There was a law that everyone should take off his hat whenever the hat of the archduke passed through the street. Because the archduke's hat was the sign of foreign rule, William Tell, a loyal Swiss, refused to take off his hat to the archduke's hat. He was ar-

rested and an apple was set on his little son's head and the father was commanded to take his bow and arrow and shoot off the apple. He did so, without harming his son. But William Tell had two arrows in his quiver. The wicked man who had arrested him and compelled him to shoot at his son, asked him what the other arrow was for. "If the first arrow had missed and my son had been injured," said William Tell, "the second arrow would have gone through your heart." One of the arrows, you see, brought life and freedom; the other was for death.

I am pretty sure that the children in that Nazareth home were the first kind of arrows—the arrows that meant gladness and freedom. I am absolutely certain that Jesus was. I know that he helped in the home in many, many ways. We have already, in some of our other lessons, suggested some very practical ways in which he helped: carrying wood, sweeping, rolling the roof, which was of earth and had to be rolled frequently to keep it hard and water-tight, running errands, and so on.

Sometimes the very best way to help in the home is not so much by doing things, important as that is, but by being things—being cheerful; being kind; being patient; being loving and sympathetic. Jesus helped in this way.

A little lame boy, only six years old, whose mother was a poor washerwoman, lived in a tiny room on a narrow street in a great city. All day long this poor little lame boy sat in his chair, looking down into the

narrow street. He could see, by leaning forward, a bit of blue sky over the tall warehouse opposite. Sometimes a white cloud would drift across the blue. Sometimes it was all dull gray.

But the street was more interesting. There were people down there. In the early morning men and women were hurrying to their work. Later the children came out, and played on the sidewalk and in the gutters. Sometimes they danced and sang, but often they were quarrelsome. In the spring came the hand-organ man and then everyone seemed happy.

The boy's sad little face looked out all day long. Only when he saw his mother coming home from her work did he smile and wave his hand.

"I wish I could help you, mother," he said one night. "You work so hard and I can't do anything for you."

"Oh, but you do!" she exclaimed quickly. "It helps me to see your face smiling down at me from the window. It helps me to have you wave your hand. It makes my work lighter all day long to think you will be there waving to me when I come home."

"Then I'll wave harder," said the little fellow.

The next night, a tired workman, seeing the mother look up and answer the signal, looked up, too. Such a little, pinched face as he saw at the high window; but how cheery the smile was! The man laughed to himself and waved his cap, and the boy, a little shyly, returned the greeting. So it went. The next evening the workman nudged his comrade to look up at the "poor little chap sitting so patient at the window," and

again that gay smile shone out as two caps waved in the air below him.

Days came and passed, and the boy had more friends. Men and women went out of their way to send a greeting to him. Life didn't seem so hard to them when they thought how dreary it must be for him. Sometimes a flower found its way to him, or an orange, or a colored picture. The children stopped quarreling when they saw him watching them, and played games to amuse him. It pleased them to see how eager he was to share in their good times.

"Tell the lad we couldn't do without him," said one of the weary laborers to the mother one night. " 'Tis a great thing to have a brave heart and a cheery one. It makes us all brave and cheery, too. Tell him that."

And you may be sure that she did.

Jesus, we know had a brave, cheery spirit that helped everyone else to be brave and cheery, too. And since he was not lame, like the poor little boy of the story, he was able to do a very great many things that were helpful in other ways.

Some one has beautifully suggested one of the other things that Jesus did. Sometimes the mother, Mary, became very, very tired with her housework and the care of all the children. Mothers do get tired, much, much oftener than they will admit, or than we know anything about. Their love keeps them going when they ought to stop and rest. Then, too, unfortunately, children don't always play together quietly and peacefully—they grow noisy and quarrelsome. Rainy,

stormy days are specially hard in a big family. Little bodies and minds are so restless and must be doing something every minute, and there isn't always enough to do in small houses.

So it was that, perhaps, at the end of the day, when his work in the carpenter shop was about done, Jesus stepped into the doorway of the little house and called cheerily to his brothers and sisters to come out to the carpenter shop, just behind the house. With a shout of joy, out they raced. And what a good time they had with the sawdust and the shavings that lay about!

Then Jesus sat down and they seated themselves around him and he told them stories. As a man Jesus was a matchless story-teller. His stories are beautiful and perfect and wonderfully told. And it is not easy to tell a good story; it takes practice. Isn't it quite right, then, to think of Jesus as telling stories to his smaller brothers and sisters? How they listened! We all like good stories. He told them the stories his mother had told him. He told them about the journeys to Jerusalem, and about the Temple. He told them about the great heroes of Israel, and he told them about God.

So it was that Jesus helped to make the home in Nazareth a home of peace and gladness. We can all, if we will, be brave and cheery and patient, like the little lame boy, and like Jesus himself. And we can all help in our homes in many, many ways, growing in this way more and more like Jesus.

LESSON XIV

JESUS AT WORK

LESSON MATERIAL: Mark 6: 3.

MEMORY VERSE: "Give diligence to present thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed." II Tim. 2: 15. (D. V. B. S. Motto.)

PURPOSE: To show the dignity and value of work honestly done.

Some folks think that they don't like work! They wish that somehow they could get along in life without work—pick their food off trees, perhaps, and have their clothing grow on bushes, and be able to plant seeds that would grow up into houses. Or perhaps they wish for Aladdin's wonderful lamp which you had only to rub in order to secure the most beautiful palace in the world, or the finest clothes, or the best food. Such folks are lazy, you say? Yes, perhaps they are. They are certainly ignorant. For work itself is the very best thing one can wish for. Let us think about that.

Nothing is more dangerous than to have nothing to do. When they have nothing to do men get into all kinds of trouble and mischief. "Satan always mischief finds for idle hands to do," is a good old proverb that our grandmothers used to quote to some of us. Without work the mind has too much time to think about little troubles, and to plan evil things. The French say that when a man is idle his mind "gnaws itself." When Charles Darwin, the great English scientist, was once taken ill, he became "scandalously lazy." "The

impression that this has made upon me," he said, "is that nothing is so unbearable as laziness."

When God placed Adam and Eve in the beautiful Garden of Eden, they had little to do, if we read the story correctly. All their wants, which were simple, were easily supplied by what grew naturally around them. They did not toil or spin. But it wasn't long before they got into trouble. Having nothing to do, they fell easy victims to the serpent, who persuaded them that God was unjust in refusing to let them eat of one kind of fruit in the midst of the garden. So they ate of the fruit and disobeyed God. And God, in punishment, took them out of the Garden of Eden, and then gave them the greatest blessing he could. He told them that thereafter they would have to work to satisfy their wants.

Jesus was a carpenter. It was as a carpenter that his fellow townsmen knew him. When he began preaching, they were astonished that a carpenter could know so much and preach so well. We, of course, know what they did not know: that Jesus' mission in the world was to preach and teach and lead men to God, and that all the time he was working at the carpenter's bench he was busy studying and preparing for his life work.

Jesus was a good carpenter. Without believing in the least all the strange stories that tradition tells about his work, we know enough of his character to know that he was honest and thorough and careful in his work, and that he took just pride in having it entirely

right. Tradition says, and in this it is probably correct, that he made yokes for the oxen, and fashioned wooden plows for the farmers, and built boats for the fishermen.

Some folks have thought, because of the Greek word used for "carpenter" in Mark's Gospel, ch. 6:3, that Jesus was not only a carpenter who worked at his bench, but also what we would call a contractor or builder: that is, he erected houses and barns, or so much of them as was wooden. He certainly knew a great deal about buildings, for he talked about the foundations of the Temple in Jerusalem. He knew that foundations built on sand are worthless, while those on rock will last even against the fiercest storm. He spoke of tearing down and rebuilding the Temple. He told about a man who tore down his barns and built greater barns in order to house his crops. And he knew of another man who started to build a building, but ran out of money and had to leave it unfinished.

Jesus knew all about workmen as well as about work. At least four of his disciples were fishermen, a poor and hard-working class of men. Jesus, therefore, knew about fishing and its hardships, as well as about the skill required to be a good fisherman. He knew about shepherds, too, and their lonely and often dangerous work in caring for the sheep, for he called himself the "good shepherd," who was willing to lay down his life for his sheep.

He knew also about farmers and their troubles: how some of the seed they planted fell on thorny ground

and was choked out; how other seed fell on stony ground and found no root, and other seed on the paths and the birds ate it up; and he knew that if a man was plowing he could not look back or the furrow would be crooked and not deep enough. He knew about harvesting, and how hard it was to hire enough men at any price to gather in the grain, for he said, "The harvest . . . is plenteous, but the laborers are few." He knew about grape-growing, for he talked about the vine and the branches, and about pruning away the bad branches and burning them.

Jesus knew all about work, you see, both from his own experience as a carpenter, and because his friends and acquaintances were workingmen like himself. There were no unions then like those which to-day have secured eight-hour days, better wages, and more comfortable working conditions. In those days men worked long hours for very small pay. Jesus knew just how tired they became, and one of his most beautiful invitations was to working people: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; . . . For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." He must have been thinking of the carefully fitted yokes he had made in the carpenter shop, although he was speaking of them figuratively here, of course.

But please notice that in this invitation, which reveals how thoroughly Jesus knew and sympathized with working people, he did not promise to relieve them of work. He promised to give them rest after their

work is done. And the spirit of Jesus is slowly, oh, so slowly sometimes, drawing men to him and giving them rest. We do not always recognize it as the spirit of Jesus, but every effort to secure better working conditions, fairer hours and wages, better homes, and more opportunity for recreation of the right kind, and for study and for church and for home life—all these are in the spirit of Jesus who promised rest to the laborer.

Some of the greatest men in the world have started as laborers, and as very humble laborers, too. But they did their work well, whether as laborers, or later as statesmen, authors, or rulers.

In England some years ago a man rose to a high place in the government. Associated with him was a nobleman of haughty and disdainful nature. When the man who had risen from humble beginnings and from great poverty first took his new and exalted position, this proud nobleman sneered: "Oh, yes, I remember you. You used to black my boots for me." "That I did, sir," was the reply, "and I am sure you will testify that I did it well!" This was not only a "soft answer" which put the nobleman to shame; but it also revealed why the bootblack was able to win so high a place: he did all things honestly and well.

Booker T. Washington, the Negro leader who became famous as a clear thinker and courageous champion of his race, began life so poor that even as a very small boy he had to work in a salt mine, starting to work at four in the morning. He had no chance to go to school, but he wanted very much to learn. All

by himself he learned to read, after his hard hours of work were over. One day he heard about a school in Virginia where a poor boy could work his way through. It was a long, long way from his home to Hampton, but his neighbors and friends contributed what they could to help him on his way, and Washington started on his five-hundred-mile journey. Most of the way he walked, catching a ride once in a while with a friendly teamster. When he reached the school he was so eager to start learning that he did not stop to clean up after his long journey, and the teacher who opened the door for him looked at him doubtfully. She finally said, "Take this broom and sweep the next room."

Booker Washington swept that floor three times. He went over the woodwork, the benches, the tables, and desks, four times. He cleaned every closet and corner thoroughly. When the teacher came back into the room she ran her finger all around the woodwork and furniture, but she could find no dirt. "I guess you'll do to enter this school," she told Booker. So Booker proceeded to study and work in the same eager, honest, and thorough way in which he had cleaned the room.

We are proud here in the United States that so many of our great men have started out in life with such poor prospects. Abraham Lincoln was a rail splitter. James Garfield was a mule driver. Benjamin Franklin was a poor printer. But one thing was common to them all. They worked, and worked hard, at whatever they were doing, giving an honest day's work. And as they rose

in position and opportunity, they still kept their habits of earnest, honest work.

Right here in our Daily Vacation Bible School we find that not everyone does the same kind of work. Sometimes boys and girls try to slide through their work in a slipshod way, taking no pride in doing it well. Such boys and girls are not doing their work in the spirit of Jesus. They cannot expect to do the big things in life well if they don't do well these comparatively small things. We should all be sincere workers.

Let me tell you what "sincere" means. Back in the days of old Rome, wealthy men liked to have a great many statues and other works of art about their houses and gardens, and many sculptors were kept busy chiseling out beautiful figures. But not all sculptors were careful and honest in their work. Sometimes their chisels slipped, and then, instead of correcting the mistake or starting over again, they placed wax in the crack, and delivered the statue as perfect. It was not long, however, before this trick was discovered, and then the wealthy men insisted that their statues should be "without wax." Now "without wax" in Latin is *sina cera,* from which, you see, we get our word "sincere." So sincere means, first of all, honest, careful work, such as Jesus would do, and then it means a fine, honest character.

Let us be sincere workmen, trying to win God's approval, workmen who need not be ashamed of our work.

LESSON XV

JESUS AND CHURCH

LESSON MATERIAL: Matt. 21: 12-17.

MEMORY VERSE: "My house shall be called a house of prayer." Matt. 21: 13.

PURPOSE: To show the function of the Church and to teach reverence for it.

We have seen in our earlier lessons how Jesus grew "in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men," helped in his growth by his father and mother, by his play, by his study, by his home life, by his work. And we have seen how we, too, can grow, as Jesus grew, by taking advantage of all our opportunities, and gladly, earnestly, sincerely, by taking his spirit with us into all of them. There is another very important place or institution which helped Jesus to grow, and which will help us—is helping us now. Can you tell me what it is? The Church.

First of all, let us find out what the Church is. Is it the walls of brick or stone or wood? No. Is it the pews and the pulpit and the organ? No. Is it the singing, the prayers, the Bible-reading, and the sermon? No. We are getting nearer to it, however. The Church is the people who worship and study about God together. It is the people who say that they believe in Jesus as their Saviour and who are trusting in him for the life he has promised abundantly, as we learned in our first lesson.

Another question: Why, then, if people who have

confessed Jesus form the Church, do we have buildings and furniture and sermons and so on? So that we may have a place to go where we can worship God all together with our prayers, our songs, and our gifts, and where we can learn more and more about him. All the different kinds of church buildings and church services and church denominations are simply things and forms that people have thought would help them better to worship and learn about God.

Jesus was God's own Son, even though he came to earth as a little child and grew up as we have seen him growing, just as you and I grow. Do you suppose that he went to church? Some folks seem to think nowadays that they are good enough; they don't need to go to church. Jesus never thought that. One of the first things that we read about him when he became a man is this: "He entered, as his custom was, into the synagogue." The synagogue, of course, was the Jews' church. We have already seen how, as a boy of twelve, Jesus was eager to be in the Temple, which the Jews thought of as especially God's house, in order that he might there learn more about God. Even the very week of his death, after he had announced that he was the Messiah, the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Son of God, even then he went daily into the Temple, to pray, to worship, and to teach others.

For it is the people who know most about God who want to know more, and who are most anxious to worship and praise him by joining with other people

in worship. It is ignorance and carelessness which cause people to disregard God and his Church.

Who do you suppose read the most books on medicine? Folks who know least about it, or doctors, surgeons, and others, who know most? Why, the doctors, of course; they are always studying and trying to learn more. Who study most about engineering, folks who know nothing about bridge-making or railroad construction, or engineers and others who know much about these things already? The engineers, of course. It is just so in all other things. People who are glad and eager to worship God and to learn about him in his Church are the people who already know about him, and because they know so much, they want to know more. So Jesus, who knew most of all about God, went oftenest to the church. The Sabbath found him always there. There is a fine old hymn which we often sing in church which begins:

"The Church's one Foundation
Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
She is his new creation
By water and the word."

Jesus did found the Church as we know it to-day, because the Church of to-day is formed of those who not only believe in God, as do the members of the Jewish synagogue churches, but who also believe in Jesus as the Son of God.

Let me tell you where and how the first church was formed. Jesus sometimes used to go up into a mountain or into the woods to rest from the crowds which

thronged about him, and to pray alone. One such time he took his disciples with him and went north toward the mountains near a city called Cæsarea Philippi. There he asked the disciples what people were saying about him, and who they thought he was. The disciples told him, you remember, that some thought that he was John the Baptist, some thought he was Elijah, and some thought he was Jeremiah.

Then Jesus asked his disciples directly who they thought he was. How anxiously he must have waited for the answer! It came from Peter, who usually spoke for the others, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." Then Jesus told Peter that upon him, Peter (which means "rock"), he would build his Church. Peter was the first to know and confess Jesus as the Son of God, and so he became the first member of the Church; and all others since who have known and confessed Jesus to be the Son of God have become members of the Church.

And how that Church has grown! From one member near Cæsarea Philippi it has increased to millions and millions of members all over the world, the biggest society or organization in all the world.

We have seen how eagerly Jesus studied. It was natural that, through the Middle Ages when it was fashionable to be ignorant and when kings boasted that they could not read or write, the Church of Jesus should have kept learning alive, and have maintained schools. We owe a great deal to the monks of the Middle Ages. And ever since, the Church has been

first in the work of teaching. Harvard, Princeton, Yale, and many other colleges and universities were founded by Christian ministers and educators. To-day the Presbyterian Church alone supports twelve seminaries and fifty-seven colleges in the United States besides twenty hundred and thirty-four schools in foreign lands.

Part of Jesus' work, and a very important part, was healing people who were sick. He did it, of course, because he loved them and pitied them. So it has been natural that the Church should be the first to establish hospitals and train doctors and nurses. In heathen lands hospitals are unknown, and sickness is thought to be the work of devils, so that very often a sick person is made much worse, or even killed, by the so-called medicine man in his efforts to drive out the evil spirits. A very important part of the Church's work to-day is hospital work. The Presbyterian Church last year supported 175 hospitals and dispensaries which treated 350,284 patients.

Other branches of the Church are doing similar splendid work. Public libraries were first started in churches, or in schools founded by churches, and there are places even to-day where the Sunday-school library is the only library where books can be secured. Many other splendid and helpful things the Church of Jesus Christ has done and is doing in his name and in his Spirit.

But, of course, the first and the most important thing in the Church's work is to give people an opportunity

to worship God together. We can, and each of us should, worship God by ourselves, in our personal prayer, in our daily work, and in our play. But as Jesus loved folks and wanted everyone to love everyone else, so it is one of the great privileges of the Church to bring together all who will come, to worship him who loves them all.

The second important part of the Church's work is teaching boys and girls and men and women more about God. So the Church has its Bible schools on Sunday, and its Daily Vacation Bible School during the summer, and its clubs and classes of all kinds, in order to teach about God and Jesus.

The Church is the Church of Jesus Christ. Let us never forget that. Jesus said, quoting the Old Testament, "My house shall be called a house of prayer." We should feel a reverence, therefore, for the place set aside for the worship of God and for studying about him. One branch of the Church teaches its members to take off their hats as they pass a church building, or to bow in reverence, not because of the building itself, but because it stands for God's presence and for the love of Jesus.

SUGGESTION TO TEACHER: The emphasis in any particular school should be placed upon that aspect of the Church which the local conditions seem to demand: perhaps upon some of the fundamental doctrines—baptism, the Lord's Supper; or upon the meaning and power of prayer; or upon the elements of worship; or upon the place of the Church in the world.

For to-morrow: Take the children on a "hike" this afternoon, to the top of a high hill if possible, and point out to them the places of special interest. The teacher will, of course, read over to-morrow's lesson before going on the "hike."

LESSON XVI

JESUS ON THE HILLS

LESSON MATERIAL: I Kings, chs. 17, 18; I Sam., ch. 31; Judg., chs. 6 to 8.

MEMORY VERSE: "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah." Ps. 144: 15.

PURPOSE: A patriotic lesson to teach that that nation is truly great and happy which serves God.

There is something fascinating about climbing hills and mountains. We all like to do it. Men and women travel from all parts of the world every year to Switzerland to climb the great mountains there, and they go to the Rocky Mountains, or the Adirondacks, in our own land in order to climb as high as they can. Boys and girls like to do it, too. There's the fun of the climb itself, and then, when you get to the top, there's the joy of the view on every side—other hills and mountains, valleys, rivers, towns, forests, and plains.

(The teacher should localize this as far as possible, using material gathered in suggested "hike" of yesterday.)

Jesus was an all-round boy, as we have seen, and, of course, he liked to climb hills. There were plenty of hills for him to climb, for Nazareth stood way up

toward the top of a high range of hills. The hill to the north rose high above other hills round about, and from one to two thousand feet above the Mediterranean Sea only twenty miles away.

Up to the top of this hill—which may have been the very same hill from which later on the angry people of Nazareth tried to throw Jesus and kill him—up to the top of this hill Jesus often went as a boy, sometimes alone just for the fun of the climb and for the view, sometimes with his playmates, and sometimes perhaps with his father or his mother, or with some other older person who could tell him about the hills and plains and roads and towns and sea.

Let us climb the hill with him this morning. We will suppose that with us goes Joseph, Jesus' earthly father, who, of course, is very familiar with all that is to be seen from the top of the hill. Of course, we shall have to see who gets to the top first. I shouldn't be at all surprised if it were Jesus himself, sturdy, strong youth that he is, and that he turns to wait for us as we run up. Then we all sit down and Joseph points things out to us.

He points first to a great mountain far to the west that sticks boldly out into the sea:

"Do you see that great ridge of tree-covered rocks? It was on that mountain side that Elijah and the false priests of Baal built their altars and called upon their gods to send down fire from heaven to light them. Only Elijah's God, who is our God and the God of our nation, sent down the fire. It was there at the brook

at the foot of the mountain that the false priests were slain. And it was there, at the topmost peak looking westward over the Mediterranean Sea, that Elijah went with his servant to pray and to watch for the little cloud that would mean the end of the terrible drought that had afflicted the land for many years. And it was far out over the sea yonder that the little cloud, no bigger than a man's hand was first seen, the cloud that soon grew and grew until the long-waited-for rain poured out on the parched ground, and brought life and health again to the suffering people and cattle."

"But, father," perhaps Jesus asks, "why did the drought come, and why did the people suffer so terribly?"

"Because they forgot God and lived evil lives, and the rich oppressed the poor, and all except about seven thousand people worshiped false gods. The rulers, King Ahab and Queen Jezebel, led the people in their wrongdoing."

Then Joseph, turning toward the left and facing south, points to another mountain inland and southward:

"That is Mount Gilboa. It was up its side that our nation's first king, Saul, fled with his three sons, Malchishua, Abinadab, and Jonathan, who loved David. They had fought a terrible battle with the Philistines in the plain down yonder, but were defeated, and as they fled away the three princes were killed by the enemy, and Saul himself, when he saw

there was no hope, fell upon his sword and died, as did also his armor-bearer and thousands of our brave soldiers."

Joseph stops and his head is sunk on his breast for a moment as he thinks sadly of the terrible scene he has just described. Let us ask him why it was that Saul, who began as such a brave and good and God-fearing king, and who at first was victorious over his foes, was at last defeated and slain.

"He forgot God," replies Joseph, "and led the nation wrongly. Sin took away his courage and his ability to lead."

"Ah! That plain, how many, many battles have been fought there!" Joseph points to the great plain of Esdraelon stretching away from him below Nazareth to Mount Gilboa on the east and Mount Carmel on the west.

"There it was that the great battle between the Canaanite army and our own army took place in the days of the Judges. Sisera was the Canaanite general, while Deborah, the prophetess, and Barak, the general, led our forces. Barak and Deborah led our army down the slopes of Mount Tabor over yonder to our left, and destroyed the whole army of the Canaanites, freeing our land once more."

"And the victory was given because the people had turned to God once more and trusted in him. Is that not right, father?" asks Jesus.

"Yes," replies Joseph, "quite right."

"Another of our great and brave generals, Gideon,

won a victory over our enemies, the Midianites, down there in the plain at the foot of Mount Gilboa," continues Joseph. "Down there, just at the foot of the mountain, though we cannot see it from here, is a spring of fine, clear water. It was at this spring that Gideon tested his men by watching them drink. He had already sent home those who were timid and fearful of the result of the battle, but still he had too many. God told him to reject all those who got down on their knees to drink, as they were not good soldiers—it would be too easy for an enemy to slay them while they were kneeling. Gideon chose only those who scooped up the water in their hands and drank it from their hands while they stood—they could be instantly ready to fight, you see. Gideon had only three hundred men after this test, but God was with them.

"At dark Gideon placed his men on the hillside over yonder, surrounding the camp of the Midianites in the valley below. Each soldier had, besides his spear and sword, a torch in a pitcher and a trumpet. At a given signal each soldier broke his pitcher and blew his trumpet. The Midianites, waking up suddenly and seeing the flaring torches on the hills on every side and hearing the trumpets blowing so loudly, were terrified because they thought that they were surrounded. They began to kill each other in their terror, and they fled in wild confusion through the pass toward the Jordan, with Gideon and his soldiers close at their heels. That was the end of the Midianites.

"And that great victory, too," added Joseph, "was

given because Gideon and his soldiers trusted God and were not afraid. Our defeats have always come when our nation has turned away from God, and become weak in mind and body through sin; and our great victories have come when the people have turned again to God, and found in him, who is so patient and long-suffering, strength to conquer their weakness and their fear."

"I know now what King David, who loved Jonathan so much—Jonathan who was slain over there on the mountain with his brothers—I know what David meant when he wrote in the psalm, 'Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah,' " said Jesus.

"But," warned Joseph, "we must not think that all the great victories of our nation, won because they trusted in God, have been victories in battle. Nations are happiest when they do not have wars and fightings, which always mean the death of many brave men and the sorrow and suffering of their wives and children and other dear ones. Many are the years that God has blessed our land with peace and prosperity, when there have been no wars: and these are the years when the people most confidently trusted in him to lead and teach them."

So it was that out there on the hills near Nazareth, Jesus learned, and you and I have learned, that a nation is strong and successful only when it is right, when it believes in and trusts God. This is true of all nations, not of the Jewish nation only. It is true of our land, which we love so much. We have be-

come strong and great and prosperous because our fathers and grandfathers believed in God and built the nation on trust in him. We shall continue to be a great and a strong nation only so long as we continue to trust in God and do what is right.

If only we could take some magic carpet and fly first to one land and then to another, and look over the mountains and plains of each land, we should find that nations have died because they lived in sin or have grown strong and prosperous and happy because, on the whole, they have done righteously and have trusted in God.

Then if our magic carpet would take us where we could see the great scenes of our own nation's history: the landing of Columbus, and of the Pilgrims, just three hundred and one years ago; the founding of schools and churches; the hard labor of the early settlers in building homes and working the farms; the heroic struggles against enemies; the great scenes like Lexington and Concord and Valley Forge and Yorktown in the Revolutionary War; the great events of the Civil War which freed our slaves; and Chateau-Thierry and St. Mihiel, where we fought for the world's freedom—how we should thrill with pride, and how we would love this great country of ours—just as Jesus loved his country.

Let us see to it, then, as good citizens of this land that has brought freedom and opportunity to the world, that it remains righteous, and that sin and wrong, oppression and greed are banished from it. Let us help

to keep it God's land, that our people may indeed be "happy."

LESSON XVII

JESUS AND THE COUNTRY

LESSON MATERIAL: Matt. 6: 26-30; 7: 15-19.

MEMORY VERSE:

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?"

Ps. 8: 3, 4.

PURPOSE: To show how nature helped Jesus to grow, and to teach love for God's out of doors, as well as God's surpassing love for man.

In some of the old Italian paintings of the crucifixion of Jesus the artists have placed a little flower, growing right at the foot of the cross, which they have called the "Alleluia Flower." We know it best by the name "wood sorrel," the little plant with the clover-like leaves that fold up at night or before a storm, and whose pure white flowers are faintly streaked with purple. An old, old legend says that the purple stripes were caused by the blood of Jesus, which dropped upon the pure white flower as he hung in agony upon the cross.

Although we cannot believe the old legend about the stripes, yet we are glad that the painters thought to place the little flower at the foot of the cross. For Jesus loved flowers and birds and animals and everything out of doors, and we like to think that as he was dying there were flowers within his view, instead of just the barren rocks and cold stones.

God's out of doors made a deep impression upon Jesus and taught him a great many things about God himself and about God's love for men. For in everything that grew, Jesus found the loving hand of God, who had made all things good. The thought came to him again and again, as it had come to his great ancestor, David, centuries before: If God has spent so much wisdom and love and care on the heavens and the trees and the flowers and the birds and the animals, how much more must he love man on whom he has spent so much more love and care, and to whom he has given all these other things in the world. (Memory Verse.)

The out of doors is a school in itself. When a city boy goes to the country for his summer vacation, he finds that he is pretty ignorant about many things the country boy knows all about.

Jesus, living in the town of Nazareth, was able to get out into the country very often, and with his keen eyes and open mind he saw and learned many, many things.

He knew, for instance, about the foxes. He had seen them scurrying across the fields toward nightfall, or early in the morning, their big tails waving in the wind as they ran toward the holes in which they lived. Do you remember the Old Testament story of Samson's capturing three hundred foxes and tying them together, two by two, with a torch fastened to their tails, and then setting them loose in the fields of the Philistines, whose crops were thus destroyed? Jesus, of course, knew this story, though he must have wished

that the foxes had not suffered so and that the great deeds of the heroes of long ago had not been so bloody and terrible.

Jesus knew that the foxes were sly, tricky animals which prowled about houses and stole chickens, and ate ripe grapes from the vines, as the writer of The Song of Solomon describes. And so he once called Herod, the wicked king who was crafty and cunning, a fox. He compared himself to the foxes also, but only because the foxes had a hole in which to live, while he, the Son of God, had nowhere to lay his head.

Jesus knew all about the birds and their nests, as every country boy knows. He knew how wonderfully God feeds and cares for them, although they neither plant nor reap. He knew that sometimes they eat the seeds which the farmers plant, the seeds that fall "by the wayside." He watched the little birds in their nests, their big mouths stretched wide open as the mother bird fed big, fat worms to them. He knew how the nests were built, and what trees the birds chose, for he talked about the mustard "tree" in whose branches the birds came and lodged.

He liked to sit out in the open field, or on the hill-top, and listen to the wind, and feel it stir his hair and fan his cheek. The wind blows where it will, said Jesus one time. You can hear it sighing through the air, and see it tossing the branches of great trees about, and whipping the lake into white-capped waves, and driving the sail boats before it, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it goes to. A real coun-

try boy loves the wind; and so did Jesus, for it spoke to him of God's own Spirit, that moves in men and in the world of men, causing things to be done, and yet which cannot be seen, nor can anyone tell just how it comes or goes.

We have already spoken of Jesus and the flowers. Do you remember how he describes the lilies of the field? Not even Solomon, the richest and most magnificent king who ever lived, was clothed as are the lilies. It is God who so clothes them. And so, thought Jesus, if God spends so much loving care on the flowers which bloom just for a few days and then die, he must love man infinitely more, and will take care of him if only man will trust in him.

Jesus watched things grow. He knew just what the corn looks like when it first comes out of the ground. Do you? And then he knew how it sends out more and more leaves, then how the ear begins to form, and finally how, in the harvest time, the full ear is ready to be gathered and eaten. He knew that all plants come from very small beginnings and grow slowly, and that just from looking at a seed it is impossible to judge how big a tree it will make. He talks about the tiny mustard seed, one of the very smallest of all seeds, which grows into a plant so big that the birds might lodge in its branches. He learned that the things most worth while take the longest to grow. As some one has said, "If God wants to make a mushroom he does it in a night, but if he wants to make an oak he takes a hundred years."

Jesus loved trees and the mountains and everything God had made out of doors. Over and over again he went out into a desert place to be alone, either quite alone by himself, or with his closest friends. And, remember, "desert place" here means just a place deserted by people, not necessarily a sandy, desolate region—in fact, Jesus' desert places were probably mountain sides where trees grew, and birds sang, and flowers blossomed, and where everything talked to him of his heavenly Father. Out there in the open, how he must have been filled with a sense of God's wisdom that could create and give life to all these things.

Man can never give life. We make artificial flowers, and pride ourselves if we can make them look pretty much like God's work, but even then they are not alive. Joyce Kilmer, one of our splendid young American writers who laid down his life in France for the cause of right, once wrote a beautiful poem about God and the trees. Joyce Kilmer was a country boy, living on the banks of the Raritan River, and he loved and learned of God's out of doors, as Jesus did. Part of his poem runs this way:

I think that I shall never see
A poem lovely as a tree.

. . . . . .

Poems are made by fools like me
But only God can make a tree.

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(It is also good to use here a stanza of Sidney Lanier's beautiful poem, "A Ballad of Trees and the Master."

Into the woods my Master went,
Clean forspent, forspent.
Into the woods my Master came,
Forspent with love and shame.
But the olives they were not blind to him,
The little gray leaves were kind to him:
The thorn-tree had a mind to him
When into the woods he came.

And so it was that Jesus learned all that God's out of doors could teach him about God's wisdom and power and love, and, above all, of God's supreme love for man, for whom he had done so much more than he has done even for the birds and the flowers and the trees.

Let me read to you that part of Psalm 8 from which our Memory Verse for to-day is chosen, so that you may see how David and Jesus and Joyce Kilmer and all others who love God and his out of doors, read God's love for man in nature.

"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers,
The moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained;
What is man, that thou art mindful of him?
And the son of man, that thou visitest him?
For thou hast made him but little lower than God,
And crownest him with glory and honor.
Thou makest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands;
Thou hast put all things under his feet:
All sheep and oxen,
Yea, and the beasts of the field,
The birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
Whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas.
O Jehovah, our Lord,
How excellent is thy name in all the earth!"

LESSON XVIII

JESUS AND THE CITY

LESSON MATERIAL: Matt. 5:33-37; 6:1-8; Luke 15:11-24.
MEMORY VERSE:

"Keep thy heart with all diligence;
For out of it are the issues of life."
Prov. 4:23.

PURPOSE: To show what the city taught Jesus, and how, in the city as in the country, we must ask him to keep our hearts pure and true.

Yesterday we saw what Jesus learned in God's out of doors. Jesus' home, however, was in a town. A wise old Greek poet said, "The city teaches the man." It does teach much more sometimes than we realize. Town and city boys know a great many things which their country friends do not know. Sometimes they know things which they would be better off without knowing. We may be sure that Jesus had the same keen eyes and eager mind in the town as in the country, and that he learned all the good things the town had to teach him, and learned to shun and hate all the bad things.

Many of Jesus' stories must have been suggested to him by what he saw and heard around him. It may be that on his own street he had seen a young man start out in life with all the fine clothes and money his father could give him. Perhaps this young man went down to Jerusalem, or up to Damascus, or to some other big city, and there got into bad companionship, took to drinking and gambling and other evil

things, until finally his money was all gone, and he was deserted by those he had thought were his friends and was compelled to do some very hard and disagreeable work in order to live at all. Jesus may have seen the grief of the old father as day after day he waited and prayed for his son to come back. And what a commotion in the street when the son was one day seen coming over the hill into the town! What a glad cry the father gave! How he ran to meet the son, who came shamefacedly and in rags! And how excitedly the father ran about telling everyone that his son had returned, the son whom he thought dead; how the son had been forgiven and was to be restored to his home again.

"If an earthly father can love a bad son so much," Jesus said, "the heavenly Father must love him much more, and wait and watch for his return and be ready to forgive him and restore him to the household of God."

And there were widows in the city, too, and unjust judges who gave no justice to poor widows, but very meekly and humbly did as rich and powerful men wished them to do. And there were taxgatherers who seized from the people all they possibly could, unmindful of the poverty and misery they left behind them.

The market place was the center of town life in Jesus' day. There it was that the men and the boys used to gather to talk and to buy and sell, but mostly perhaps to talk. All about were the little stalls where goods were sold. Over here was a bird stand, and

what do you think was sold there? Live birds to hang in cages? Oh, no, birds for eating—sparrows for the most part, for larger birds, chickens and ducks and geese, were too scarce and too expensive for the poor folks. Two sparrows were sold for a farthing, which was less than a cent. They were the same birds that Jesus had watched flying so happily through the air—now ministering to man's want. Over yonder was another stall where something of more value was sold, perhaps cloth or shoes. Jesus must often have stood by while the merchant and his customer bargained. For there were no fixed prices as with us; the merchant asked a price higher than he expected to receive, and the buyer offered a sum less than he expected to pay.

"By my head," said the buyer, "I will give you only ten farthings for it."

"By the altar, then," responded the merchant, "you will not get it. I demand twenty farthings."

"By the earth, the miserable rag isn't worth it, but I will give you twelve farthings."

"By heaven, it is worth it, and I'll take not a bit less than eighteen farthings."

"By Jerusalem, I'll not pay eighteen farthings. I will give you fifteen."

"Very well, take it for fifteen. But by the Temple you are robbing me."

Jesus saw the foolishness of all this bargaining, and later he spoke about it. "Swear not at all," he said; "neither by the heaven, for it is the throne of God;

nor by the earth, for it is the footstool of his feet; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, for thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your speech be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: and whatsoever is more than these is of the evil one."

Think that over, boys and girls, when you hear men and women and boys and girls swearing. Think how foolish it is, as well as how blasphemous it is in God's sight. Stick to "Yes" and "No." Be so honest that when you say simply, "Yes," or "No," people will know that you mean it.

Very likely Jesus saw, in the same market place a leader in the Church. Everyone straightened up as he passed by and put on his best smile and made the finest bow, and said, "Rabbi, Rabbi!" The great man moved onward with his chest out and his head in the air, well pleased with the stir he made and the attention he attracted. He was hardly out of hearing, though, when heads got together and those who had bowed the lowest and smiled the most sweetly were gossiping about what a hypocrite he was, how stingy he was to his family, and how he never gave to a beggar, and how he played a sharp trick the other day in business.

Is it any wonder if Jesus thought, "What is the use of a title or of smiles and bows if a man is not worthy of the title, or if it keeps him from knowing what people really think of him?" So he told his disciples not to be called "Rabbi," and he himself would not let men

call him either "Rabbi" or "Master" until he was sure that they really meant it.

What title we have, or what office we hold, is not important, so long as we ourselves are worthy, so long as we keep our hearts with all diligence, as the writer of Proverbs tells us to do in to-day's Memory Verse; for out of the heart, and not out of titles and outward show, are the real issues of life.

Probably Jesus saw, too, over in the corner of the market place a man praying out loud.

"What a pious man!" whispered those around. "But the market place is not the place for sincere prayer," thought Jesus, and later he taught the truth to his disciples. "A man should go home and shut his door and then pray to God. This man prays now just in order that people may think he is a good man. But that is no prayer at all."

So in the city market place Jesus saw men undo what God had done. He saw them treat lightly the most wonderful and sacred things. He saw them hate each other and quarrel one with another. He was sorry, and he thought that when he could he would tell men how foolish these things were and how they ought, simply but earnestly, without show, without hatred, love God and love their fellow men.

You and I, whether we are in the city or in the country, must see many things that are wrong. Let us not copy the wrong things, but follow Jesus' example, and keep our hearts with all diligence, as Solomon has told us we must do, and as Jesus will help

us to do. And let us resolve to do all we can to set right the things that are wrong. But we must begin with ourselves.

LESSON XIX

JESUS CHOOSING HIS LIFE WORK

LESSON MATERIAL: Luke 3:21-23; 4:1-15.

MEMORY VERSE: "Choose you this day whom you will serve." Josh. 24:15.

PURPOSE: To show Jesus' definite acceptance of his life work, and urge the necessity of deliberate choice of life work for everyone.

During the Great War, when the Turks were torturing and killing the Armenian Christians so brutally, three hundred Armenian men were led out from their village to a valley near by, and there lined up facing the Turkish soldiers. The Turkish captain spoke to them, telling them that if they would just raise their hands as a sign that they would turn from Christianity and become Mohammedans their lives would be saved; if they did not raise their hands they would be shot at once. Immediately the whole three hundred tore the robes back from their chests and cried, "Shoot!" The Turkish soldiers began firing, and men dropped fast. Only a few were saved by the late arrival of a messenger from the governor ordering the execution to stop. These brave men were called upon suddenly to choose; their past lives, their training, caused them nobly to choose Christ and death rather than Mohammed and life.

There is a beautiful picture which shows the inside of a splendid temple in Rome. It is a temple to Diana, the heathen goddess of old Rome. On one side of the temple is an image of the goddess, before which a fire is burning. Near the image stands a beautiful young girl with a troubled and sad expression on her face, while round about her friends and family watch her anxiously. The priests of Diana are urging her to do something. Do what? Merely throw a little incense on the fire. Not very much to do, was it? But in doing it she would be renouncing Christ and accepting Diana. Burning the incense meant Diana and life: refusal meant Christ and death. Thousands upon thousands of men and women and boys and girls have had to make just such choices as the Armenians made only a few years ago, or as the Roman girl made two thousand years ago.

Jesus made such a choice. So must we all of us at some time or other. We have seen in our Bible lessons this summer how Jesus grew up from a baby to a boy and to a young man, until now he came to be a full-grown man, about thirty years of age. We have learned how he grew in body, in mind, in heart, and in spirit. We have seen how he thought all things out carefully, asking God to guide him so that he would see things and do things aright. As he grew older he must have thought very often and very deeply, as he worked at his carpenter's bench, about all the things which he had seen and heard, and wondered how it was that men should be brought to see and know God as

he knew him and as God was anxious that they should know him. He realized that his Father had not taught him and led him all these years in order that he should remain a carpenter always; that his Father was preparing him for a very special work in the world. We do not know just when there came to him the realization that he himself, Jesus of Nazareth, was the Messiah, the Redeemer, the Saviour, the Son of God—not the kind of Redeemer most of the Jews were expecting, but the kind Isaiah had foretold—a suffering servant of God and men.

Then came the news to Jesus that his cousin, John the Baptist, was rousing all the nation to enthusiasm, to repentance from sin, and to expectation of the Messiah, by his preaching; and that John was baptizing all who would repent as a symbol of the cleansing of their lives and their consecration to a new and higher purpose. Jesus knew that John's call to service was for him as well as for others. He must choose between the quiet of the carpenter shop and a life of service and suffering and almost certain death. Knowing Jesus as we do, we know that he could choose only one thing—he could only follow the Father's plan for him, which was, as we learned in our lesson on Isaiah, to preach the gospel, to teach, and to heal. So Jesus went to John to be baptized, as a sign of his dedication to God's work. And as they came out of the water, a very wonderful thing happened. The Father made known to Jesus how pleased he was. "Thou art my beloved Son," he said; "in thee I am well pleased."

Then Jesus went out into the wilderness to think and to plan and to pray. It was not necessarily a rocky and desolate wilderness. There were the trees and the flowers and the birds that Jesus loved, and that spoke to him, for the forty days while he remained there in earnest thought, of his Father's love and care. So eager was Jesus, and so exalted by the thought of his life work and his relationship to the Father, that for forty days and nights he ate nothing. But during that time he thought through his general plan of work.

Then came the Devil. He is always around waiting to catch folks, and he knows how to go to work, too. Jesus was hungry, and the Devil, knowing about Jesus' great plan, about the voice at the baptism, and about his power suggested that Jesus use this power to turn some stones into bread. Now Jesus was very hungry after his forty days' fast. But he knew that his miraculous power was for a certain definite purpose and that it was not to be used for his own comfort and safety. So he told the Devil that bread is not all that there is to life; that there are other things much more important. Especially is it important to live according to God's Word.

Some folks live as though bread and butter and money and position were all of life. They use all the power and ability they have for themselves alone, forgetting the fact that they have been given this ability in order that they may use it for others.

Then the Devil took Jesus to Jerusalem and suggested that since Jesus hoped to convince all people

that he was the Messiah, the Son of God, a fine way to do it quickly would be to jump down from the high part of the Temple, "for," said the Devil, who can quote the Bible better than some Christians, "It is written,

> He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: . . .
> On their hands they shall bear thee up,
> Lest haply thou dash thy foot against a stone."

But Jesus, although he wanted above everything else to have people believe in him and so believe in the Father, knew that this way of making them do it was not God's way; that God's way was through patient teaching and helping. So Jesus told the Devil that it was also written, "Thou shall not make trial of the Lord thy God." You see how well it was that Jesus had been a good student of the Bible.

Folks nowadays have a temptation much like the temptation that Jesus had. They want things done quickly, which God plans should be done slowly. They want to finish school and get to work as quickly as possible, when God means them to prepare for their work thoroughly and patiently. Remember how Elijah learned that God works quietly, and speaks in the still, small voice more often than he works or speaks through the earthquake, wind, or fire.

The Devil spoke to Jesus again, this time suggesting that if Jesus would fall down and worship him, he, the Devil, would turn all the kingdoms of the world over to Jesus. Such a little thing for Jesus to do! And such a great result promised, the very result that Jesus hoped to bring about! But

it wasn't a little thing for the Armenians to have held up their hands, or for the Roman girl to have thrown incense into the fire before Diana. It was a big thing. If Jesus had once worshiped the Devil, he would have had to continue to do so. Jesus therefore replied instantly, as the Armenians replied, "It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Jesus chose deliberately the long, hard path of battle with sin, and of suffering, and of death.

Doesn't it seem sometimes as though if we yielded just a little it would not make much difference and things would be so much easier? But there is no such thing as a little yielding, or a little sin. One little giving away means that all is in danger.

Jesus deliberately chose to follow God's plan for him. He chose to follow it fully and faithfully without any yielding anywhere in spite of what seemed like easier ways to spend his life and other ways of getting the results God wished for. He knew that God's plan was the only plan that in the end would work out right.

The time will come when you, boys, and you, girls, will have to decide how you are going to spend your lives. First of all, you will have to decide whether, like Jesus, you will spend them for God. And then you will have to decide just how God wants you to use whatever ability he has given you, the training you have received or can get, and the opportunities around you. So many boys and girls just drift into their life work, going into a factory or a shop or what-

ever else first opens up when they leave school. It is a serious thing to invest a life. You cannot be sure that you are putting your life in the right place unless you spend time and thought and prayer in the matter, just as Jesus did. I hope that every one of you will later think carefully and prayerfully about God's plan for you, and then earnestly and honestly follow that plan through life.

SUGGESTION TO TEACHER: In connection with tomorrow's lesson invite a physician or other qualified person to give a short talk on personal hygiene, good and bad habits, and the like.

LESSON XX

JESUS THE MAN

LESSON MATERIAL: Luke 4:28-30.

MEMORY VERSE: "For we are a temple of the living God." II Cor. 6:16.

PURPOSE: To present Jesus as a strong, virile type of man and to urge proper treatment and care of our bodies as temples of the living God.

What are you? I do not mean, are you a boy or a girl; are you tall or short, or fat or thin, or light or dark, or anything of that kind, but just what I said: "What are you?" I wonder if you have ever stopped to think of that?

Let's do it now. Are you your feet? Your hands? Your head? Your heart? Your lungs? Your brain? Or your whole body put together? No, I think you will agree with me that you are more than all these

and different from them. You are something that causes your feet to walk, your hands to work, your head to turn, your whole body to move. You are something that lives in your body and controls it. In other words, your body is the house in which you live.

Turning back again to the very first chapters of Genesis which tell how God made everything, we find there beautifully pictured the creation of man, after all the rest of the universe had been fashioned. "And Jehovah God formed man of the dust of the ground." That was the first part. God made a house for man to live in—a very wonderful house, out of the dust of the earth; a house which, after we are through with it, will return to the dust again. Then we read, God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." That is, you, who live in your body, are a part of God himself, which is what our Memory Verse means when it says, speaking of our bodies: "For we are a temple of the living God."

In just the same way, the real Jesus was not the body in which he walked about while here on earth, but God's own Spirit in that body. We know very much about Jesus himself, his spirit of love and service and sacrifice. We know very little about the body in which he lived while on earth. Perhaps the writers of the New Testament were so eager to tell us about the real Jesus that they quite forgot to speak about the temple in which his spirit lived. At any rate, no one knows exactly how Jesus looked or what kind of body he had.

Many, many artists have tried to put on canvas their idea of how Jesus' body and his face appeared. Many of them have pictured him as pale and thin and sorrowful, and not very rugged or strong. But if we read our Gospels carefully, we shall find hints here and there which seem to prove that such an idea of Jesus' bodily appearance is quite wrong, and that Jesus was unusually strong and vigorous and attractive.

When the angry crowd in Nazareth came to seize Jesus and throw him over the cliff, he quietly passed through their midst and went his way. This would seem to indicate that he was of such commanding and powerful appearance that people dared not touch him. His presence was so majestic that people shrank from before him. There are many stories of men who have similarly escaped angry crowds in just this way, by calmly and quietly walking through their midst. But they were all powerful and dignified, and awed the crowd into quietness.

Then we find that Jesus over and over again made long journeys on foot, and worked hard for long hours at a time. No weak man could have stood what he stood. He became tired, it is true, but a short rest seems always to have made him ready for another day's hard work.

Then just think of all the people who, looking at him, were instantly affected in one way or another. To be sure, it was his spirit shining through his face which was the cause of the attraction, but how it must have glorified his face! Sick people, lame people, deaf

and dumb men, all of them seemed to find comfort and strength just in looking at him. No weak or sickly or emaciated person could inspire such confidence. Even insane people were calmed and cured by his presence. We know to-day that strong men can sometimes calm demented persons just by their calm and dignified presence—but only strong men. Big, rough men forsook all—their families, friends, and work—to follow Jesus. Little children nestled confidently and lovingly in his arms. John the Baptist humbled himself before Jesus; the rich young ruler knelt before him. Even wicked Pilate was impressed by his kingly presence and manner as he endured the mockery, the spitting, the scourging, and the shame. The centurion who watched him die on the cross amidst the scorn and contempt of the crowd, exclaimed, "Truly this was the Son of God." (See Farrar: "Life of Christ As Represented in Art." Book II, Ch. 1.)

Jesus himself within the body spoke through the body. But all that we have been talking about indicated that Jesus' body was a temple worthy of his spirit, and that his face and his form were themselves strong, sturdy, and attractive. Jesus was no weakling, nor should we ever think of him as such. We may be sure that he carefully looked after his body—his temple—doing nothing that would weaken or mar it or destroy its usefulness. For he, better than any other, knew that God had given him this earthly body as a temple in which and through which he was to do God's work in the world, and that if the body were weak-

ened by bad habits or wrong living, God's work could not properly be done.

How did Jesus grow strong and sturdy? We have already seen. The simple but good food in the little house in Nazareth, the walks through the fields and on the hills, the play, the work, the happy spirit. All these helped.

What about you and your temple? If we are to grow like Jesus in every way we shall have to do what we can to make our bodies strong and sturdy and attractive. Some things we must do and other things we must not do.

Just two things we shall have time to speak of this morning, out of the very many things that hurt our bodies when we indulge in them. The first is anger. Did you know that doctors have proved that anger actually hurts the body? that it forms a sort of chemical in the blood which prevents food from digesting properly and hinders the blood from carrying off the impurities of the body? So it is quite natural that, other things being equal, happy people should be healthy people. Jesus' happiness and kindliness, therefore, would have much to do with making his body strong and attractive. Beauty is much more than skin deep; it is as deep as the spirit itself.

The other harmful thing we shall talk about this morning is smoking, especially cigarette smoking. The class of 1868 at Dartmouth College took a record of all of its members as to whether or not they smoked. In 1918, fifty years afterwards, the class secretary

made a study of the age at death of those who had died. He found that the average age at death of tobacco users was forty-nine years and nine months; but those who did not use tobacco had lived to the average age of fifty-nine years and four months, or ten years longer than those who had smoked. The same facts were studied for six other classes and the same results obtained, the smokers dying anywhere from three to fifteen years earlier than the nonsmokers. Smoking very evidently harms this "temple of the living God" which we call our body. Jesus would condemn it, therefore, and so should we.

Other harmful things—you mention some for me? Drink. Yes, and how proud we ought to be that our country has had the courage to banish this destroyer of bodies and souls. We who shall some day be citizens must see to it that evil men never again succeed in restoring the curse of drink to the land we love so much.

Other harmful things? Wrong dress; wrong food; overeating, even the right kind of food; breathing impure air; uncleanness in person or clothing; neglect of the teeth; lack of proper exercise; impurity of life. All these things we must avoid if we would keep our bodies pure and clean and strong.

On the other hand, there are certain very definite and important things we must do, just the opposite of the harmful things we have mentioned. Dress properly; breathe plenty of pure air; take enough, but not too much, of the right kind of exercise; keep body,

teeth, and clothing clean; be clean in thought and life.

But most important of all, as we said at first, is the right kind of spirit within our bodies. You are the most important of all. Do you know the story called "The Magic Mask"? (The story, greatly abridged here, will be found in Cabot's "Ethics for Children," page 45.)

There was once a great and powerful and wise and brave prince. All men respected and feared him, but none loved him. The lines about his mouth were hard and grim. There was a deep frown on his forehead and his lips rarely smiled. He fell in love with a beautiful princess of his kingdom, who had never seen his face. He wanted very much that she should love him, but he feared to show her his face, with its stern, ugly lines, lest it frighten her as it did so many others. Then a happy idea came to him. He sent for the court magician, and told him to make for him a mask of the thinnest wax, with pleasant features and a smiling countenance, a mask that once fastened on should never come off.

The magician agreed to do this, but only on condition that the king should keep his face in the lines he would paint. One angry frown, one cruel smile, would crack the mask and spoil it forever. The prince eagerly agreed and asked the magician how he should arrange to keep his face in the lines of the mask. The magician told him that he must train himself to think kindly thoughts and do kindly deeds; that he must try to make his kingdom happy rather than great—build

schools instead of forts, hospitals instead of battleships; that whenever he was angry he must keep perfectly still until the feeling was gone away and be gracious and courteous to all men.

So the wonderful mask was made. The princess fell in love with its pleasant features and married the king. At first the mask was often in danger of being destroyed, but as time went on the king found it easier and easier to keep his face in the lines of the mask.

At last, however, he went to the magician and asked him to take the mask off. He felt that he was deceiving the princess whom he loved so much, and that he would rather suffer her scorn than further deceive her. The magician protested and said that he could never make another mask if he took this mask off. Still the prince insisted. So the magician took the mask off, and the prince in great anguish went to look at his face in the glass. As he looked, his eyes brightened and his lips curved into a radiant smile, for the old, ugly lines were gone and his face had become exactly like the mask which he had worn so long. His changed spirit of happiness and helpfulness and love had changed his hard, ugly face into an attractive and beautiful face.

It was this spirit in Jesus that made him so attractive and so commanding among men. It is the same kind of spirit that will make our "temples" strong and attractive also, as God fully intended them to be.

LESSON XXI

THE MIND OF JESUS

LESSON MATERIAL: Luke 10:25-42; 20:19-47.

MEMORY VERSE: "Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Phil. 2:5.

PURPOSE: To show Jesus' vigor of mind, and stimulate to like vigor and purity.

You remember we learned that Jesus grew, not only in stature, but in wisdom. He was a good student and thought all things out carefully. It was well that he did, for when he became a man and began his life work, men came to him for all kinds of advice. Some tried to entangle him and confuse him by asking him puzzling questions. If he had not studied and thought so carefully he might have failed, but as it was, he was ready for them. To honest questions he gave careful and kindly answers, but to foolish questions he made sharp and decisive replies.

A lawyer came to him one day and asked him questions, trying to catch him. Lawyers, you know, are skilled in asking questions. This lawyer thought he had a question which would trip Jesus. "Teacher," he said, in mock respect, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" But Jesus was too wise to be caught. Quietly he asked his tormentor what was written in the Law. He, a lawyer, ought to know without asking. You see how foolish that made the lawyer appear. Apparently the lawyer was ashamed of himself, for then he asked Jesus a really important and

serious question and Jesus gave him a full and beautiful answer in the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Another time the religious leaders came to Jesus and asked him a question. They thought that his answer would prove either that he was a traitor to the Roman government which then ruled Palestine, or that he was a traitor to God, the head of the Jewish race and religion. They asked if it was right and lawful to pay taxes to the Roman government. You see if he had said, "Yes," they would have accused him of blasphemy in denying that God was the ruler of the Jews. If he had said, "No," they would have reported him to the Romans as a traitor. But again he was too wise for them. He asked them to bring him a coin. Then he asked, "Whose image and supercription hath it?" And they said, "Cæsar's." "Then render unto Cæsar," said Jesus, "the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's. And they were not able to take hold of the saying before the people: and they marvelled at his answer."

Another time some Sadducees came to him who did not believe in a resurrection from the dead. They asked him a very foolish question about life after death. Jesus told them that they were ignorant in asking the question, for in the life after death men are sons of God, and things are quite different from what they are on the earth. Then "certain of the scribes answering said, Teacher, thou hast well said. For they durst not any more ask him any question."

Still another time a man came to Jesus and asked him to compel his brother to divide some money with him. Jesus refused, saying that he was not a judge, and told the man to beware of covetousness. If the man had legal claim to the money, he should take it to the proper court, but he should be perfectly sure that he was not sinning by breaking the Commandment which says, "Thou shalt not covet."

Again and again Jesus proved too wise and too shrewd for his questioners. Not that he dodged the questions, but he brought men always face to face with the really important things in life, their relationship to God and to their fellow men. So wise and right were his answers that the people who heard him were astonished at his teaching, and asked each other where he had learned so much, seeing that he had never been to school, that is to college.

Jesus was not only wise and thoughtful, but his mind never harbored unclean or impure thoughts. We can't think of Jesus as willingly listening to unkind gossip, or impure stories, or evil words. He sometimes overheard them, of course, on the street or in the market place, but he never let them stay in his mind. There wasn't room there for them. He was too full of pure and kindly thoughts.

The prophet Ezekiel once had a queer dream. He thought that God led him to the Temple in Jerusalem, to the door near the inner court, and when he looked closely he saw a hole in the Temple wall. Ezekiel dug into the hole until he came to a door. God told him

to go in and see what was there. In he went and saw a strange and awful sight. In there, where they thought no one would ever see them, he found seventy men looking at paintings on the walls of the room. These paintings were of three kinds: every form of creeping things, abominable beasts, and idols. Here were supposedly respectable men, looking at and worshiping these awful paintings in the chambers of their imagery. Ezek. 8:7-12.

Do you see what it meant? That men had thoughts in their minds, deep down inside where they thought men never would know, thoughts which were impure and bad. But God knew about them.

What were the thoughts they had? First of all, "Every form of creeping things." Snakes and worms and all the slimy, ugly, poisonous things that crawl around in dark, dismal places are like evil, impure, slimy thoughts, which have no business in one's mind. Let us make sure that they are not making their home in ours.

Then, too, there were "abominable beasts"—evil passions, the green-eyed tiger of jealousy, the great, black bear of wrath, the howling wolf of envy, the sly fox of deceit and treachery, and many others. Have you any of these beasts in your "chambers of imagery"? Better chase them out quickly before they destroy you or do you serious harm, or worse even than that, before they cause you to harm some one else! For "abominable beasts" are never satisfied just to live; they do harm wherever they are. And so do our

evil passions unless we tame them or drive them out.

Third, there were "idols." What are idols? Anything that takes first place in your mind instead of God. Love of a good time, love of money, love of clothes, love of popularity, love of self-indulgence—all these are idols because they come between you and God. They have no right to the chief place on the walls of your minds.

One day a little boy ran home from school and called out eagerly: "O mother, what do you think of Tom Jones? I just heard that"——

"Wait a minute, my boy. Have you put what you have heard through the three sieves before you tell it to me?"

"Sieves, mother? What do you mean?

"Well, the first sieve is called Truth. Is it true?"

"Well, I really don't know, but Bob Brown said that Charlie told him that Tom"——

"That's very roundabout. What about the second sieve, Kindness? Is it kind?"

"Kind! No, I can't say that it is kind."

"Now the third sieve—Necessity? Will it go through that? Must you tell this tale?"

"No, mother, I need not repeat it."

"Well, then, my boy, if it is not necessary, not kind, and perhaps not true, let the story die."

These same sieves will keep out the creeping things and the abominable beasts and the idols. Let us use them.

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ

Jesus," an active, thoughtful, well-stocked mind, and a mind that will not tolerate anything unclean or hurtful!

LESSON XXII

JESUS AND MEN

LESSON MATERIAL: Matt. 14:14; Mark 5:43; Luke 14:12.
MEMORY VERSE: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Lev. 19:18.
PURPOSE: To show Jesus' intense love for men and his passion to serve them, and to stimulate similar passion in the pupils.

We all know the many stories of Lincoln that show his love for all men and his sympathy for their troubles and suffering. He loved little babies. Once when he heard a baby crying out in the hall near his office, he ordered the baby and its mother to be brought in at once, although statesmen and generals and other important people were waiting to see him. The mother had come to ask pardon for her son, a soldier, who had been found asleep at his guard post. Lincoln granted the pardon, for the baby's sake, as he explained, but also because he could not think of human life being needlessly destroyed.

Lincoln loved older children, too. A little girl in a western New York town once wrote him that she thought he would look better if he would grow a beard. He did grow a beard, and it happened that some time later his train stopped at the town where the little girl lived, to allow Lincoln to make a speech. He remembered his little friend, and sent for her, and showed

her that he had done as she suggested, and told her how glad he was to have her write him.

Lincoln loved grown-up folks, even those who did not understand him and opposed him. One day when some one brought him news that a plot to kill him had been discovered, he was deeply hurt and said he did not see why any living person should want to hurt him, as he wished only the best for everyone. We like to think of him in his own beautiful words, "with malice toward none, with charity for all."

It is because Lincoln understood and loved other folks so much, and gave his whole life to making others happier, that the world loves him to-day.

Lincoln loved people as a man loves. Jesus loved people as God loves. He gave his whole life to making people happier and better. And because he, the Son of God, so gladly gave his life for others, men everywhere love and reverence him, and he is the Saviour and the Friend of all. Do you remember some of the stories about Jesus and his love and helpfulness of other folks?

You have seen a big crowd? What did you think as you looked at all those people? And how did you feel toward them? There is a very beautiful story of Jesus and a crowd of five thousand people. They had been listening to Jesus as he talked to them and healed their diseases. Then he received the news of the execution of his friend and cousin, John the Baptist, in the prison of Herod, the wicked king. Jesus wanted to be alone, and so he took his disciples and went over

to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. But the crowd followed him even there. How would you have felt? Do you know how Jesus felt? He "had compassion on them." He remembered how they had been with him for so long a time, and how many of them were far from their homes, how darkness was falling, and how there was no place near by where they could buy food. He thought of the little children and of the lame folks, of the blind and the sick and the old people. He knew that many of them would faint by the roadside if he sent them home without supper.

So he told his disciples, who wanted to send them away, to feed them. You remember what happened. The disciples said that they could not possibly feed such a multitude. But Jesus told them to bring to him what food they had. They brought him five loaves and two fishes; and then Jesus used the power which God had given him to make this small amount of food do for the great multitude of people. He fed them all, and then sent them home. Jesus, you see, loved folks so much that he thought of all their needs even before others spoke about them.

Jesus seems to have been always especially thoughtful about hunger. Not only did he feed the five thousand hungry people, but when he restored to life the little daughter of Jairus, the first thing he told the father was to give the little girl something to eat. Always he thought of the poor and the lame and the maimed and the blind, and how they often had to go day after day without food. So he commanded the rich people

to make banquets and feed these poor, hungry folks, instead of feasting other rich men and women who already had enough.

Jesus loved children. They crowded around him one busy day, and his disciples wanted to send them away. But Jesus gathered them in his arms, saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto me; forbid them not: for to such belongeth the kingdom of God."

I think therefore that Jesus' great, loving heart must be sorrowing to-day for all the thousands and thousands of hungry and starving men and women and children in Europe and Asia. And he must rejoice when you and I give out of our plenty here in this great, favored country for the feeding of our poor brothers and sisters across the sea. For he said once, "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these my brethren, even these least, ye did it unto me."

(To the teacher: Emphasize this point, especially if your school is making an offering for a special cause such as famine relief.)

But it was not only great crowds that Jesus loved; he loved, too, the individuals who came to him. A very rich young man once stopped Jesus on the road, and asked him what he should do to inherit eternal life. The Bible says that "Jesus looking upon him loved him." Nevertheless Jesus' love did not blind him to the young man's needs; his love was so great that he wished the young man to be and to do what was right and godlike. He saw that riches stood in his way, so he told him to sell all that he had and give

to the poor, and then to come and follow him. But the rich young man's "countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful: for he was one that had great possessions."

Another man whom Jesus especially loved was Lazarus of Bethany. Lazarus fell sick one time and his sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to Jesus, "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick." When Jesus came to Bethany, Lazarus was dead, and as Jesus stood before his tomb, John tells us, "Jesus wept." Then he used the power God had given him to restore Lazarus to life.

So it was all through his life. Jesus loved people, and because he loved them he went among them doing good, healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out evil spirits, and preaching to them the good news of God's love for them. And we read that "The common people heard him gladly."

But, although Jesus loved everyone and wanted to help all if they would let him, some men were so wicked and hard-hearted that they not only refused to be helped by Jesus, but even deliberately plotted to destroy him, and to add still further to the misery of the poor and the sick whom Jesus was trying to help. For such men Jesus uses pretty strong words, calling them hypocrites and liars, blind guides, and other things. He once said that it would be better for a man to have a great millstone tied about his neck and be drowned in the midst of the sea than to live and cause some child, or some man, or some woman, who believed in

Jesus to stumble. Jesus believed in men, and earnestly longed to see and help them become godlike. The greatest sin in his eyes was injuring some one else, or feeling contempt for another. We ought to be very careful that nothing that we ever do or say will make it harder for some one else to be good or to be happy.

Lazy folks, also, Jesus condemned. He told about men who were continually preaching and advising and promising but who never did anything themselves. He told a story about a man who had two sons, whom he told to go and work in the vineyard. The first son said that he would go, but he did not; the second son said that he would not go, but later he repented and went. The second son, Jesus said, was the one who did the will of his father. It is actions, not words, that count.

Then there are people who are enthusiastic about something for a time, but as soon as things get a little hard they give up. They become "weary in well-doing." Jesus also condemned these.

Another time Jesus told about a servant who was supposed to take care of his master's property, but who kept putting it off day after day, until suddenly the master came home and found things not ready. That kind of workman, the careless, lazy, put-off-till-to-morrow kind, Jesus also condemned.

So, you see, much as Jesus loves folks, he still sees them as they are, and condemns what is wrong in them, as well as approves what is right. He condemns only that the wrong may be made right. Let us not think, as sometimes people say they think, that because God

loves men so much he will never punish their wrongdoing. Sin and wrongdoing bring their own punishment, and it is a weak sort of love that shuts its eyes to sin and evil. Jesus' love is strong, and just because it is strong, it must condemn sin strongly.

One of Jesus' disciples is often referred to in the Bible as the disciple whom Jesus loved. This disciple was John. A beautiful story is told about John in his later years. Though he suffered bitter persecution and imprisonment and exile, it is thought that John lived to be a very old man and for many years before his death was pastor of the church at Ephesus. When he became so old and feeble that he could not walk to his church, he was carried in a chair and set down before the people. His sermon was short and always the same, "Little children, love one another." Finally some one asked him if he had nothing else to preach about. "No," he said, "there is nothing except love. Love is all."

And so it is. If all men loved each other there could be no thefts, or murders, or oppression, or wars, or poverty. For each would try to help the other instead of trying to get all he can for himself. Love is of God, and we cannot really love Jesus and serve him, unless we love folks as Jesus did. For as John, about whom we have just heard, says, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, cannot love God whom he hath not seen."

Jesus said, "Greater love hath no man than this, that

a man lay down his life for his friend." Jesus gave final proof of his great love for men by laying down his life for them on the cross, in order that through his death they might have life.

LESSON XXIII

JESUS' TEACHING ABOUT GOD

LESSON MATERIAL: Luke, ch. 15; Matt. 7:7-11.

MEMORY VERSE: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Luke 10:27.

PURPOSE: To present Jesus' conception of God.

Caliban lay one day just at the entrance of his dismal cave, flat on his stomach. His toes kicked about in the slimy mud, and the little lizards and worms crawled over his arms and back. Bees buzzed about in the sunshine, and once in a while a flower or a fruit fell where he could reach and crush it. As he lay there he began to think about the god of whom his mother had told him, whom she called Setebos. Caliban wondered where Setebos lived, and decided that he lived in the cold of the moon. He knew that Setebos had made the moon and the sun—though he thought somehow the stars were otherwise made—and the island where Caliban lived, and the trees and the birds and the beasts and all the creeping things on the island. But Setebos, he thought, had made them all just for spite and because it happened to suit his fancy; Setebos did not love them, did not know what

love was. He did as he happened to wish at any particular moment, just as Caliban, watching the crabs crawl slowly by him, let twenty of them pass and then reached out and killed the twenty-first; and the first crab that had purple spots he seized and twisted a pincer off, then put it back in line again. There wasn't any reason for it. He just happened to feel so.

So, thought Caliban, the best way to live as comfortably as possible is to keep out of Setebos' way and not to seem too happy lest Setebos should be jealous and spitefully hurt or kill him, for Setebos himself is not happy and so cannot abide seeing others enjoying themselves.

Poor Caliban! We are glad that he is just an impossible being in Robert Browning's poem, and that there is no god Setebos. And yet, boys and girls, men have believed in just such gods as Setebos, and in some parts of the world they still believe in such a god today—a god who is hateful and ugly and unhappy, and who jealously watches men and women and boys and girls to see that they do not become too comfortable or too happy; a god who, just because it happens to please him at the moment, will hurt or destroy some one, laughing pitilessly at the suffering he has caused. How miserable are men who believe in such a god!

Jesus came to earth to tell us about the true God, and to show us in his own life just what God is like. Almost at the end of Jesus' earthly life Philip, one of the disciples, asked Jesus to show them God. Jesus answered him sorrowfully, "Have I been so long time

with you, and dost thou not know me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father." This was a bold statement to make, and, of course, could have been made only by Jesus, who is God himself, and who, all through his earthly life, in study and thought and prayer had kept close to God and had perfectly done God's will.

Poor Caliban thought that his god was a cold, unhappy, unloving being. Jesus told us first of all that God is love, and love can never be cold or spiteful or cruel. Love can never hurt just for fancy; although sometimes the truest love must hurt in order to help, just as sometimes a doctor has to hurt a sick person in order to cure the body of an illness.

God is love. We have already seen how Jesus loves people. The Father loves them in the same way, therefore, and is anxious to help and to forgive. Jesus knew how a true, earthly father is glad to give good gifts to his children, to provide bread and clothing and shelter for them. How much more then, said Jesus, shall your heavenly Father, who is so much greater and more loving than the best of earthly fathers, how much more shall he give good things to those that ask him? So Jesus commands us to ask, and it shall be given to us; to knock at heaven's door and it shall be opened; to seek for God and his love and we shall find him. God will never turn away an earnest seeker, as earthly fathers sometimes turn away their children. Even when we forget him and do wrong God never forgets us. Jesus told a wonderful story to show

how much God loves us, and how ready he is to forgive us if we are sorry.

There was once a man who had two sons, said Jesus. One of them asked his father to give him his share of the family property, and the father did this gladly. Then the son left his father and his home and went far away to see the world and to have a "good time," as he thought. It was not long, however, before his money was gone and he found himself compelled to do the hardest and most unpleasant jobs in order to earn enough for food. By and by he realized what he had done, and how miserable he, a son, was, while even the servants at home had plenty to eat and to wear. So he decided to go back to his father, ask forgiveness for his selfishness and sin, and tell his father that he was not worthy any longer to be a son, that he just wanted to be a hired servant. But during the years of his son's absence the father had never ceased to love him and to yearn for him, and to long for his return. Every day he stood in the door and looked out over the hills to see if perhaps the son was coming home. At last his long waiting was rewarded; far away in the distance he saw the figure of the son for whom he had so long mourned. While the son was yet a great way off the father ran and greeted him, throwing his arms about him and kissing him and eagerly welcoming him home. In spite of the son's insisting that he was no longer worthy to be called a son, the father drew him into the house, put a ring on his finger, dressed him in the very finest clothes, and

prepared a great banquet for him as a welcome home.

So does God love men, said Jesus. Wherever we are, whatever we are doing, God knows and cares. He cares so much that the very hairs of our head are numbered, Jesus declared one day. Jesus came into the world to seek and to save those who are lost, and to give them abundant life; so God, too, always seeks out those who are lost and tries to win them back to life and peace again. God cares for us. He is glad when we are glad, and he is sorry when we are in sorrow or in trouble. People, even those who call themselves Christians, have sometimes felt that God sends trouble and temptations. But that, of course, is not right. James, in his letter, wrote that God can tempt no man. Can you think of Jesus causing anyone trouble or unhappiness?

Caliban's god Setebos was miserable and unhappy and wanted no one else to be happy. But Jesus talks about God's joy. Some folks seem to think that Christianity is a very solemn and sad affair, and that Christians should never smile or play or enjoy life. But Paul talked about the "gospel of the glory of the blessed [happy] God." I Tim 1 : 11. Do you remember the story of the three servants to whom their master gave a certain amount of money before he went away on a journey? The first two servants took their money and made more money by using it in business, but the third servant just kept his and gave back the same amount to his master when he returned. The master praised the first two servants and told them to

enter into "the joy" of their lord. God, of course, was the Master of whom Jesus was speaking, and we are the servants who are to enter in and share his joy with him if we are faithful. God is a joyful God and wishes us also to be joyful.

Jesus also spoke of the joy in heaven when a sinner repents and returns again to God, a rejoicing even greater than that of the father whose prodigal son returned home from the far country. In his last talk to the disciples Jesus said, "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full."

So God wants us to be happy, as he is happy, as Jesus was happy, in spite of his suffering and sorrow. A follower of Jesus ought to be the very happiest person in all the world.

One other thing we can mention of the many things that Jesus taught us about God. That is, that we can talk with God at any time and that he will hear us and answer us. God is anxious to have us talk to him and to answer us. What is it that we call talking to God? Prayer. Do you remember how often and how earnestly Jesus prayed? At mealtime he returned thanks to God. When he was confronted with suffering and need, he asked God for help that he might help the sufferer, and then he thanked God for the help. He prayed for himself, and he prayed for his disciples, and he prayed for all men.

So often did Jesus pray and so real was his praying, that his disciples came to him one day and asked him

to teach them how to pray. Do you remember what he taught them? The prayer we call The Lord's Prayer, but which is really the disciples' prayer. It begins, "Our Father which art in heaven," calling God the most beautiful name of all, and bringing him very close to us. In this prayer Jesus told us that we are to ask first of all that God's plans shall be carried out here on earth and in our lives: "Thy will be done." Then we are to ask for our daily needs: "Give us this day our daily bread." Then we are to ask for forgiveness, showing that we ourselves have the forgiving spirit by forgiving those who have wronged us. Then we are to ask to be kept from falling into temptation, asking God to deliver us from the evil that is all around us.

Being able to talk to God is a wonderful thing. Poor Caliban was terrified at the very thought of his god's overhearing even his thoughts. We ought to be exceedingly glad and thankful that God is a God to whom we can talk freely, knowing that he will hear and answer us.

But there is another part to prayer, that is, God's talking to us. Sometimes we forget to wait for an answer when we pray; we do not give God an opportunity to speak. Prayer is not wholly our speaking to God; it is remaining quietly and thoughtfully waiting for God to speak to us. And he does speak, through the still, small voice that Elijah heard there on the mountain side, warning us against wrong and telling us what is right.

God then, Jesus taught, loves us, cares for us, is happy with us, and rejoices when we talk with him and when we let him talk to us. He ought to be first in our thoughts always.

LESSON XXIV

JESUS' DEATH FOR US

LESSON MATERIAL: Luke, chs. 22, 23.

MEMORY VERSE: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:16.

PURPOSE: To show the meaning of Jesus' death for us.

We have seen Jesus growing up from babyhood to youth and to manhood. We have seen him going everywhere, healing and teaching men and drawing them closer to God. Now we come to the strangest and most wonderful part of his life—his betrayal and trial and death.

It is hard for us who know him and love him so well to understand the wickedness of men who could hate him enough to want to kill him in the terrible way they did. We are sure that if we had been alive then, we would have done something to help him, and that we never, never would have betrayed him, or denied him, or forsaken him.

You remember that the first time Jesus went to the Temple, when he was twelve years old, was for the feast of the passover, the great feast to celebrate God's deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. The last time Jesus went to Jerusalem was for the

same feast. He went in spite of the warnings of his friends and disciples that men were waiting to put him to death. Danger could not turn him aside from his duty.

He came into Jerusalem on the Sunday morning before the passover feast, and you remember how gladly the children, and the older people, too, welcomed him. They thought that surely now he would raise an army and fight against the Roman power, and deliver them from bondage. They were ready to follow him into battle. All the week he came and went in Jerusalem, spending the nights at the home of Mary and Martha and Lazarus in Bethany, just a few miles outside of Jerusalem.

It was the custom for families or for groups of friends to keep the passover feast together. So Jesus made arrangements, or sent two of his disciples to make arrangements, to keep the passover feast with his disciples in an upper room in one of the houses in Jerusalem. When all was ready Jesus and the twelve disciples sat down to the supper, and as they were eating Jesus talked to them in a wonderful way about himself and about God. But he also told them that one of them should betray him; he told Peter that he would deny him; and he told them all that they would suffer that night because of him.

After a while Judas, the treasurer of the little group, slipped out. Judas was greedy for money, and had agreed to betray his Master to his enemies for thirty pieces of silver.

After supper, Jesus took bread and broke it and gave it to his disciples to eat, telling them that the broken bread was a symbol of his body which would be broken on the cross for them. Then he took the cup, and blessed it, and told his disciples all to drink of it, for the wine was a symbol of his blood which would be shed on the cross for them. Then he commanded them to observe these symbols of the broken bread and the poured-out wine unto the end of the world, for they would speak to men of his body and his blood, and of his death in order that men might live. This is why all churches observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, or communion.

After supper they went out, as they were often accustomed to do, to the Garden of Gethsemane, at or near the foot of the Mount of Olives. There Jesus left eight of the disciples. He took Peter and James and John a little farther with him into the Garden, and told them to watch while he withdrew a little farther still to pray. His prayer was so earnest that great drops of blood stood out on his forehead. But even in the face of the danger of their Master, the three disciples could not stay awake. Three times Jesus came and found them asleep, instead of watching as he had told them.

The third time he told them to sleep on and take their rest. Even as he spoke, a band of men, armed with swords and staves, came up the mountain side, lighting their way with torches. Judas led them, for he knew that his Master would go to the Garden to

rest and pray. Peter impetuously drew his sword and cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. But Jesus rebuked him, and touched the ear and healed it. Judas, still pretending to be a faithful friend, stepped up to greet Jesus with a kiss, the customary greeting in Eastern countries. By that sign the armed men knew who Jesus was.

"Are ye come out, as against a robber," asked Jesus, "with swords and staves? When I was daily with you in the temple, ye stretched not forth your hands against me: but this is your hour, and the power of darkness." Wicked men are usually cowards, and do under cover of darkness what they do not dare to do in the light.

So they seized Jesus and led him away to the high priest's house. Peter, although he had said he never would deny Jesus, even if all others forsook him, made the mistake of following afar off, so that it wasn't certain whether or not he was a friend of Jesus. Apparently Peter was badly frightened, for three times when people accused him of being a friend of Jesus he denied it. Then he realized what he had done and went out and wept bitterly.

Inside the high priest's house, the men mocked Jesus and beat him. They blindfolded him and commanded him to tell who it was that struck him. The high priests in the Jewish court examined Jesus, asking him what he had been teaching.

When morning came they led him to the Prætorium, which was the judgment hall of Pilate, the Roman

governor. There they made false charges against him, saying that he stirred up the people, and had forbidden them to pay tribute to Cæsar—which was just what he had not done. One charge they did make which was true, though not as they thought. They accused him of claiming to be king of the Jews. Jesus was King of the Jews, but his Kingdom was not of this world; he was King over their souls and not over their earthly affairs.

Pilate was not able to find any guilt in Jesus which would permit him to sentence him to death, and he would gladly have released him if the priests and Pharisees had not insisted that Jesus be condemned. Pilate was a weak man who did not dare oppose the wishes of the crowd. When he heard that Jesus' home was in Galilee, the province over which Herod was ruler, he tried to dodge responsibility by sending Jesus to Herod, who was then in Jerusalem for the passover feast.

Herod and his soldiers mocked Jesus, and arrayed him in gorgeous clothing because of his claim to be king of the Jews. Then they sent him back to Pilate, since even Herod, whom Jesus had once called a "fox," could find no guilt in him.

Pilate again tried to release Jesus, but the priests again insisted that he be crucified. It was the custom at the feast of the passover to set free a prisoner, and Pilate thought that if he offered to release either Jesus or a very noted and desperate criminal named Barabbas the priests would not hesitate, but would take

Jesus. So much did the priests hate Jesus, however, that they actually chose to have the wicked murderer released instead of Jesus. So Pilate yielded, and washing his hands—as if he could wash his hands of such a terrible act!—he delivered Jesus, the Son of God, the man who had given his whole life to teaching and healing and helping others, to be crucified.

Then the soldiers took Jesus and led him away outside of the gates of Jerusalem to a hill called Calvary. Jesus, weakened by the terrible events and the suffering of the night, fell under the weight of his cross, and so they called Simon of Cyrene to carry the cross for him.

When they reached Calvary they crucified Jesus, driving nails through his hands and feet to fasten him to the cross. On each side of him a thief was crucified. One of the thieves cursed Jesus and reviled him, but the other asked forgiveness, which Jesus gladly granted.

Even as he hung on the cross the soldiers and the priests mocked Jesus, and the soldiers shook dice for his garments. Jesus' friends, his disciples, and the little group of women, stood off at some distance watching, with breaking hearts, the agony of him whom they loved, as he hung there dying.

We must remember that they did not know what we know now, that he would rise again from the dead on the third day, and that his real work was only accomplished in his death. They believed that it was the end of all their hopes. Jesus, seeing them there,

told John, the beloved disciple, to take care of Mary as if she were his own mother; so thoughtful of others was Jesus, even in his death agony.

As it grew late in the afternoon—the Jewish Sabbath began at sundown—the crowd became impatient, and the soldiers brutally broke the legs of the two thieves to hasten their death. One soldier thrust a spear into Jesus' side. Blood and water rushed out, showing that he was already dead, his heart broken because of the sin of men.

Then came Joseph of Arimathea, a secret follower of Jesus, and asked permission to take down the body of Jesus and bury it in his new tomb in the hillside. Hastily, for it was nearly the Sabbath when a dead body could not be touched, they took the broken body of Jesus from the cross and laid it in the tomb of Joseph, across the entrance of which the soldiers rolled a great stone, sealing it with the Roman seal in order that no one might steal the body.

Sorrowfully, hopelessly, the disciples, Jesus' mother, Mary, and the other two Marys, went back into Jerusalem to wait until the Sabbath was over, that they might then prepare the body of their loved one for permanent burial.

Wicked men thought that they had disposed forever of Jesus, who so courageously and plainly had denounced their sin and called them to repent and return to God. Jesus, though he had never sinned, died on the cross as the worst of sinners. But it was God's plan. Out of the very hatred and wrath of wicked

men God has brought life and joy to the world. For the death of Jesus brought to the world the conviction of its terrible sin, and men, turning to him and believing in him, find their sins forgiven and receive new life and peace and joy. "Jehovah hath laid on him the iniquity of us all." Through the death of Jesus we receive the great and final proof of God's love for us, even while we are yet sinners.

LESSON XXV

JESUS ALIVE TO-DAY

LESSON MATERIAL: Luke 23: 56b to 24: 12.

MEMORY VERSE: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." Matt. 28: 20.

PURPOSE: To teach that Jesus is alive to-day, and to show how we can serve him by serving others.

Jesus was crucified, dead, and buried. In the gathering darkness of that terrible Friday, his disciples, his mother, and the other women who had watched his bitter death, made their way to their homes in Jerusalem, heavy-hearted and in despair. Life seemed as black as the night that had hung over the face of the earth at the time of his death.

Saturday was the Jewish Sabbath, and "they rested according to the commandment." But very early in the morning of the first day of the week, the women gathered their spices together and started for the tomb of Jesus that they might prepare his body for permanent burial. As they went a great earthquake made the street rock under their feet. "Who shall roll away the

stone for us," they asked each other, "the great stone which the soldiers placed at the entrance of the tomb so that no one should steal away the body?"

When they reached the garden, and looked up the hill, they saw to their astonishment that the stone was rolled back. Reverently entering in they were amazed and terrified at what they saw. The body of Jesus was not there, and at the right side of the empty tomb sat a young man in a white robe who spoke to them: "Be not amazed: . . . he is risen; he is not here: behold, the place where they laid him! But go, tell his disciples and Peter, He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see him, as he said unto you."

Can you imagine something of the bewilderment and fear that swept over these women as they tremblingly crept out of the tomb and started back to the city to tell the disciples what they had seen and heard? Even yet they were not able to understand that Jesus had actually risen from the dead. They still thought that some one had come and taken the body away to bury it in another place. But they ran on as fast as their trembling legs would carry them until they came to the house where the disciples were staying. Then they told them all that had happened. The disciples, in spite of the fact that Jesus had several times told them that he would rise again from the dead, thought the words of the women were just "idle talk," perhaps the result of their great grief, and they refused to believe. But Peter, who always did things first, and John, who had loved Jesus so tenderly, hurriedly left the house and ran to the

tomb. John, the younger man, came first to the tomb, but hesitated to enter. Peter, impetuous Peter, rushed in, and found things just as the women had described. The body of Jesus was gone. The graveclothes in which the body had been wrapped were neatly rolled up and laid aside. Then John also looked in.

Suddenly there burst upon John the wonderful truth. Jesus had risen, even as he said. Back to their homes with glad hearts and joyous words they went.

But not everyone believed so easily or so soon. Mary was standing outside of the empty tomb, weeping. As she looked in she saw two men in white, who asked her why she wept. "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him," she replied. As she turned around she saw a man standing near her, and supposing it to be the gardener, she cried out to him, "Sir, if thou hast borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away."

Then Jesus, for it was he, spoke just one word; he called her by name: "Mary!" Our loved ones have a special way of speaking our names so that we know at once when they speak to us. So Mary knew that it was Jesus who called her. With a heart full of gladness she ran to tell the disciples that it was really true that Jesus was alive; that he had spoken to her.

Later in the day while two men were going to the little village of Emmaus not far from Jerusalem, a stranger joined them and began to talk with them. They told him of all the strange things that had happened and of the report brought by some of the disci-

ples and by the women that Jesus was risen from the dead. They invited the stranger in to dine with them, in true Eastern courtesy—and while they were eating their eyes were opened and they looked closely at their guest. It was Jesus himself! Immediately he slipped away again, leaving them to talk over excitedly their walk and talk with him. "Was not our heart burning within us, while he spake to us in the way?" And as fast as they could run they returned to Jerusalem and told the disciples of their marvelous experience. "The Lord is risen indeed!" was the exclamation of everyone.

While they were talking together, Jesus himself appeared with them, and they were afraid. "Peace be unto you," said Jesus, and he showed them his hands and feet. Then they believed and were glad. Thomas, however, was not with them. When they told him that they had seen Jesus, he refused to believe until he himself should have actually thrust his finger into the wounds in Jesus' hands and feet and side.

A week later, when all the disciples were together again, Thomas with them, Jesus appeared. "Thomas," he said, "Reach hither thy finger, and see my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and put it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing." Then Thomas, in reverent wonder, exclaimed, "My Lord and my God."

So it was that all were finally convinced that Jesus had actually risen from the dead. We are just a little bit glad that they were so hard to convince, because, since they were finally convinced, it makes it all the

more certain to us that they did see and talk with Jesus, not only these few times I have described this morning, but other times also. So certain were they of Jesus' resurrection that they died martyrs' deaths, many of them, because they insisted on telling others of Jesus' death and resurrection. What a glorious message to give to the world! That Jesus had conquered sin and death and was alive forever—and that because he was Victor over the grave, so also would be all those who believed in him!

Death is not the end of all. Jesus' resurrection forever proved that. And Jesus alive forever assures us that the same loving, kindly, powerful Friend whom the disciples learned to know and love in Palestine so many years ago, is our Friend to-day, and will forever watch over and care for and help all those who will believe in him and love him and serve him.

But it is not enough to know that he lives, and that he loves us and cares for us. It was not enough that the disciples and the women should know that Jesus had risen from the dead. If we really believe this, we can't keep it to ourselves. We dare not keep it to ourselves. Jesus commanded his disciples to go into all the world and tell people everywhere about his life and his death and his resurrection, promising them, in the words of our Memory Text for to-day, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

This commandment to tell everyone about him, and the promise that he would be with his followers even to the end of the world, is made to us to-day just as truly

as it was to the disciples so many centuries ago. And oh, how the world to-day needs to be told the story of Jesus' life of love and kindness as we have learned it in our Daily Vacation Bible School: the story of his death and of his resurrection and of his living presence with us to-day. For, although millions do know and love and serve him, because there are so many people in the world to-day, there are more people now who do not know and love and serve him than there were when he rose from the dead nearly two thousand years ago. But to-day Jesus has millions of messengers to tell others the story of the Saviour, if they only will.

Think of it! Everywhere men are hating each other, harming each other, and doing ugly and impure and dishonest things. In India, in China, in Africa, men and women are still worshiping idols of wood and stone, and still believing the most hideous and awful things about gods and devils. Everywhere we find children starving and cold, being brought up in evil surroundings and in ignorance, and compelled to work long hours when they ought to be in school or at play. Even in our own loved country all men do not serve Jesus.

What a privilege it ought to be then for us, who know how the love of Jesus would change all these black and terrible conditions—what a privilege it ought to be for us to speak and give, and perhaps even go ourselves, to tell men and women and boys and girls about him.

The best place to begin is, of course, right at home, in school, and at play. We can all do that. And per-

haps as we grow older God will open the way for some of us to be ministers or missionaries or workers for him in some very definite way. But wherever we are, we can be real witnesses for him always.

A beautiful story is told—though of course it is only a story—of Jesus' return to heaven.

"Are you back so soon?" asked Gabriel in surprise.

"Yes," replied Jesus, "my work is done."

"Does everyone know of your life and the message of peace and good will which you brought to men?"

"No," said Jesus, "not everyone. In fact, very few really know it—just Peter and James and John and a few others. But they will tell others about it."

"Are you so sure then?" asked Gabriel again. "You know Peter failed you once."

"I have no other plan," said Jesus. "I am depending upon Peter and James and John and the others. And they will not fail me."

We know that they did not fail him. At the cost of comfort, of home, of life itself, they went everywhere telling men and women of Jesus and his message, through Jesus' living presence bringing purity and truth and peace wherever they went.

So, boys and girls, Jesus, who is with us to-day and always, is depending on you and me to tell others about him, and to bring to others the message of love and good will and righteousness which he came to the world to bring. Surely we will not fail him. We cannot fail him, for he says to us, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

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